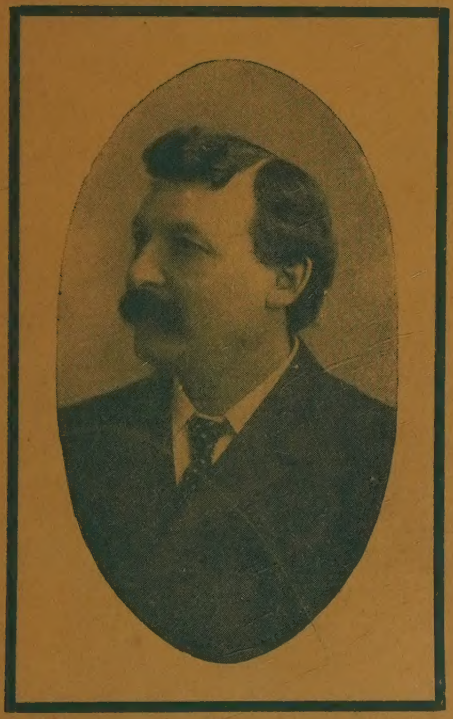
"As Jesus Passed By" and Other Sermons

Addresses

BY

GIPSY SMITH



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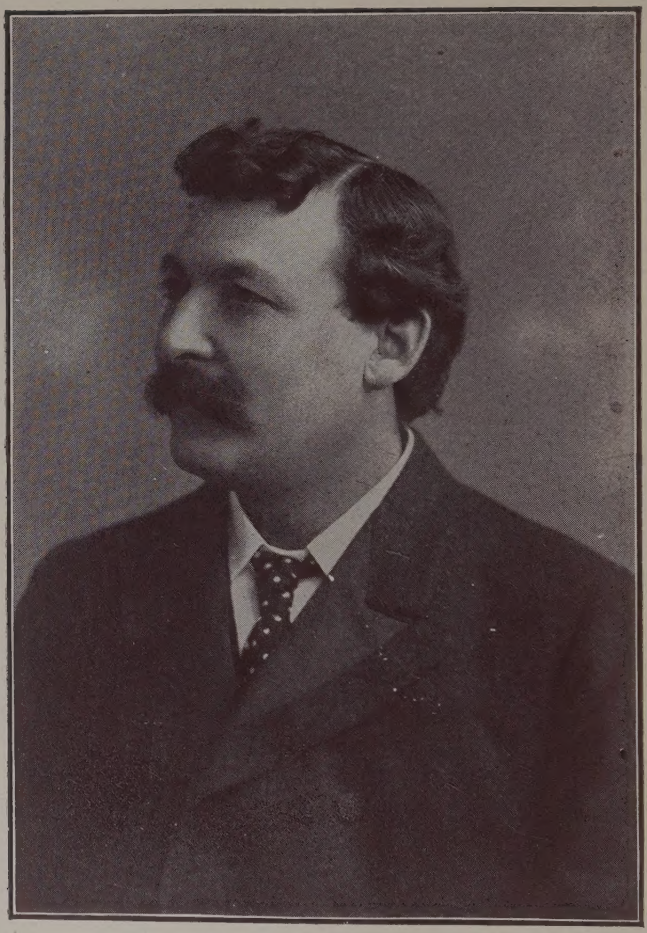

Yours heartily
Gipsy Smith

As Jesus Passed By

And Other Addresses

By
GIPSY SMITH

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Preface

AFTER much pressure I have consented to the publication of these Addresses. They were delivered to crowded audiences with a burning desire to bring those who heard them to an immediate decision for Christ. Here they are, practically as they were spoken, and if I am so led, they will be preached again, for God has been pleased to bless them to thousands. Whether heard or read, my one desire is the extension of Christ's kingdom all over the world.

GIPSY SMITH.

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I

AS JESUS PASSED BY; OR, FOLLOW ME

"And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll. And He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him."—*Matt. 9 : 9.*

I

AS JESUS PASSED BY; OR, FOLLOW ME

This is Matthew's modest way of telling all generations how he was converted. Matthew could have made a great deal more of that epoch-making moment in his life. Sometimes I think when he wrote just as much as my text he would not write any more that day. Can you not see between the lines what a story is there untold? He does not even tell you that he lived in a big house. He does not tell you that he made a big feast. He does not tell you that he invited all his old friends to come and meet with Jesus at the feast. He leaves others to tell you that little bit of the story. He simply says there was a feast. Very modest is Matthew. He says Jesus saw a man, and said to that man, "Follow Me," and the man followed; that is all. Some of us at certain moments of our lives cannot trust ourselves to tell all the story. We keep something back; we cannot trust ourselves to put the story into words. There are pages in every life that will never be written. There are stories

untold to mortal ear over which the angels rejoice. There are moments when only the sky and the sun, the moon and the stars, the birds and the flowers, and the heaven eternal can hear all we have to say of His wonderful grace and mercy. We can only tell a bit of it, just a little bit of it. I want you to think of this wonderful moment—and it was a wonderful moment, a moment when gospels were born, a moment in which history began to breathe, a moment when in his soul there was placed the germ-joy that will make heaven pulsate with hallelujahs. It was a wonderful moment in his life when he saw Jesus standing there calling him by name, speaking to him as a man would to his friend, appealing to him.

Why should Jesus go to this man? Because this man needed Jesus. I believe deep down in this man's heart he was longing for Christ. I am not so sure that he had not heard John the Baptist preach. I am not so sure that he was not already a convicted sinner. I am not so sure that he had not heard John say, "Behold the Lamb of God!" There were moments in his life when he longed to get a look at that dear face, to hear the music of that voice, and

catch some inspiration from His life-giving message, and to feel the touch that healed. And I can imagine that even that day he could not see his books for his tears. He was at his business, you remember; he sat at the place of toll, everything in front of him, and while he was thinking of the inward longings, while the soul-hunger was gnawing, while the man within the man was talking to him and setting in motion thoughts and feelings that were eternal, I can imagine him saying, "Oh, shall I ever see Him?" And maybe he laid his head on his hands in his grief, and at that moment Jesus said, "Matthew, Matthew, follow Me." You know Matthew was ready to do it. He did it instantly, without asking a question, without any hesitation. He acted as though he had made his plans as to what he would do if he had the chance. He left all. He does not tell you that, he leaves the others to add that bit to the story; and his all was the possibility of becoming very rich. He left it all: he left his books, he left his business, he left his office, he left his position, he left his friends, he left *all* to follow Jesus. Matthew had counted the cost, and knew what he would do if the chance came. Jesus knew it too. He

knew where Matthew sat, just as He knew where Nathanael prayed under the fig-tree. He knows where you are, Matthew at the place of toll or Nathanael under the fig-tree, or Zacchæus in the tree. He knows, He sees. There is no look heavenward, there is no desire heavenward, there is no aspiration after goodness, there is not an honest struggle for a nobler life in your heart, in your home, anywhere, everywhere, but what God sees and God knows. And, listen to me, there never is a good desire, there never is a noble thought, there never will be an aspiration for a holier life, but what is God-given and God-inspired. He knows. And He knows where you sit, my brother. Here is a man handicapped, a jewel in an unlikely place, here is a man that nobody wanted, ostracized by his very profession, separated from decent folk by his calling, unpopular and hated. There he was; he never had had a chance. The Church did not want him, and when Jesus Christ took the trouble to save him. The Church of his day did not want him, and I am afraid there are some Churches in England who would not thank you to fill them with the harlots, the publicans, the gamblers, the drunkards, and the sinners. And yet they are

the sort that heaven opens its doors to. Don't forget that. They are the people for whom Christ died—not the righteous, but sinners. And there are people who would sit in committee and dictate to the Son of God as to who He is to save. They did it in Matthew's day. There are people who would sit in judgment on the Christ of God. They would question the authority of Omnipotence to save the sinner. "This Man eateth with sinners." It shows how much they knew of this Man and His mission to the world. What does this story mean? It means this: that for every man there is a chance. The Christ I have to preach gives a chance to the worst, to the most unlikely, to the most degraded, to the most hated, to the most sinful, to the most despised, to the people who were born into the world with the devil in their blood, the blood of the gambler in their veins, the blood of the harlot in their veins. And when I think of it all and look at some people, the wonder to me is that they are not worse than they are. God have pity on the little boys and girls in the world who are made drunk before they are a year old! God have pity on the child-life of to-day! For such Jesus came.

And He chooses to find out about these people, the people that nobody wants, and He says, "I want you; I am after you." It is a new way of treating sinners. Did you ever think of it? A new way of treating sinners, wrong-doers. Prison for wrong-doers, the law courts for wrong-goers; the whole fabric of society is built up to keep off wrong-doers, to keep away wrong-doers, to keep out wrong-doers, to shut up and shut off wrong-doers, and Jesus Christ comes and opens His arms to them, and says, "Come to Me; I will receive you." That is the Christ for me! To set the prisoner free, to break the chains of them that are bound, to open the prison doors and say, "March out; I will make you free by My mighty power." It means a chance for every man. And Jesus sees far more in these people that are far from Him than we have seen yet. If you and I had the eyes of Christ we should see in the filthiest wretch that walks the street something worth saving. If you and I only had the vision of Calvary we should never weary, we should never tire, we should never lose heart, and we should never lose hope. We should believe that for the worst there is a

throne, a song, an anthem. May God help us to believe our gospel!

Why did Jesus go to Matthew? Because Jesus knew that Matthew needed Him. Nobody could do for Matthew what Jesus could. Don't forget that. Matthew had never had a chance. Nobody but Jesus could give him one. He was in a bad setting; his whole life was a tangle, his whole life was knots. Nobody wanted him. And you know people like that. There are some connected with you that you would rather not see. You tremble when you see them, and when their name is mentioned. There are some names you do not talk about to others; you try to forget; you won't talk about them. There is a skeleton in every cupboard. The most of us here have somebody connected with us that we do not like to mention; we try to forget; and yet, God knows, the agony of it eats the life out of us. They are the people who need Him.

It is no good to say to some people, "Believe, believe." They need somebody's fingers to unravel the knots, to untie and straighten things out; and who is to do it? Those whose whole life has been cursed from their very birth, they

are handicapped in their very blood, and who is to deliver them? Can anybody do it? Is there no God who can do it? Listen—the fingers that weaved the rainbow into a scarf and wrapped it around the shoulders of the dying storm, the fingers that painted the lily-bell and threw out the planets, the fingers that were dipped in the mighty sea of eternity and shook out on this old planet, making the ocean to drop and the rivers to stream—the same fingers can take hold on these tangled lives and can make them whole again, for He came to make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. Blessed be God, Jesus can do for Matthew what nobody else can, and He can do for you, my brother, what your friends cannot do. He can take the desire for drink out of you; He can cure the love of gambling that is eating the soul out of you; He can put out the fires of lust that are burning in your being and consuming you by inches; He can take the devil of lying out of you, the devil of cheating out of you, of fraud out of you, of hypocrisy out of you. Jesus can do what nobody else can; the preacher cannot, the Church cannot; but the Lord Jesus, who loves you, is mighty to save.

Let me go another step. There was something that Matthew could do for Jesus that nobody else could—and I say that reverently. Jesus needed Matthew. Ay, and He needs you. They looked at Him and said, "He is a sinner." "Yes," said Jesus, "and he will write My first Gospel." Only give him a chance; you do not know what there is hidden in the drunkard. There may be a preacher, there may be an evangelist, there may be a gospel. You do not know. Give them a chance; give them all a chance. "A sinner." They were fond of using these words. "He is a sinner." They used them about the man in the tree. "Yes," said Jesus, "he is a sinner, and he is a son of Abraham." And it was Jesus who spoke on both occasions. You would not have gone for a scribe for the Son of God to a publican. No! But Jesus has a wonderful way of showing what He can do with unlikely material. A little child cried just now. Its little voice in coming days may startle the nation. The waving of its little hand may marshal the hosts of God. Who can tell? That little boy at your side may become a Spurgeon, a McLaren, a Whitefield, a Wesley. Who can tell the possibilities of a child? That

little girl may be a Mrs. Fletcher, a Florence Nightingale, a Catherine Booth. Who can tell? And God wants them all. There are gospels hidden away, untold yet, but they will shine out and flash in letters, golden capitals, and make the world glad with a great gladness.

You saw the sinner, Jesus saw the man. He saw the sinner too, and He knew what the sinner would be when grace had had a chance. The world sees the face and the clothes and the house, the street you live in, where you work, and reckons you up by how much your salary is. Jesus does not reckon that way. See that sailor—drunken, filthy, vile of lip and impure in soul—a drunken sailor. Nobody wanted him; nobody cared for him. God looked at him and saved him; and his name was John Newton, the poet, the preacher, but God could see the theologian, the preacher, in the drunken sailor. See that man, a swearing tinker; so swearing, he says of himself, that when he began to swear his neighbours shuddered. Nobody wanted that tinker. But God looked at him and saved him; and his name was John Bunyan, the immortal dreamer. You would not have looked for the "Pilgrim's Progress" in that swearing tinker.

God looked at that man, a publican—and you know what a publican is—helping his brother to sell beer in Gloucester. God looked at him and saved him; and his name was George Whitefield, the mighty preacher. Look at that man selling boots and shoes in a shoe store in Chicago. God looked at him and saved him, and when He took the trouble to save him and that young fellow offered himself to a Congregational Church as a Church member, they saw so little in him that they put him back on trial for twelve months; and his name was Moody. And Moody has put one hand on America and another hand on Britain, and they moved towards the Cross. See that man, the plaything of the village, full of devilry, mischief, roguery, fond of pleasure and sin. Nobody cared for him except his mates, and God saved him; and his name was Peter Mackenzie, a sunbeam in the lives of thousands. Look at this picture—a gipsy tent; there is a father and five little motherless children, without a Bible, without school. Nobody wanted them—who does want a gipsy? Nobody—outsider, ostracized, despised, and rejected. But God looked on that poor father and those five motherless little things and saw them in their

ignorance and heathenism, hungry for God. And He looked again, and He said, "There are six preachers in that tent." And He put those arms that were nailed to the tree round the father and the children and saved them all; and I am one of them. It takes love to see. Love saw more in Matthew than anybody; and sees more in you, my brother, than anybody else; and if no one wants you, He does, and if no one loves you, He does. If no one cares, He cares; and if you think there is not a friend in the world, you have more friends than you think, and they are closer to you than you dream. God is here, and He says, "Come to Me, follow Me, and I will save you; I will give you a chance for this world and the next. Only follow Me."

Matthew never did a wiser or nobler thing than when he took Christ home. Everybody there had a chance of blessing that day. Think of what it would mean for your home if you, my brother, took Christ home with you. Your wife and children would have a chance they have never had before. If both of you—husband and wife—bow at His dear feet together, what joy there will be in heaven and on earth! It would mean your home for Jesus. You will give Christ

a chance with every child in your home by taking Him there. Matthew took Jesus home with him; and He will go home with you if you will ask Him, and He will go with you this night. God help you!

I can believe there are scores and hundreds who mean to follow Jesus. Who will leave all to follow Jesus? Who will sacrifice everything for Jesus' sake? Who will take their stand for Jesus, and who will go home and say to their friends, "I have come to tell you what great things the Lord hath done for me"? Jesus calls to you. Will you follow?

II

REPENT YE!

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching, . . . saying, REPENT YE."—*Mark 1 : 14, 15.*

II

REPENT YE!

The Bible, especially the New Testament, is the handbook of repentance. It commands it, it urges it, enforces it, repeats it, drives it in everywhere. Over sixty times repentance is enforced. The great doctrine of repentance occupies a very prominent place in the teaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles. All the epistles were written to show men how to do it, because there is no such thing as vital communion, fellowship with God, without it. And I want to speak plainly about Bible repentance, and I pray God to help me, for I have not anything pleasant to say. It is far easier to congratulate than it is to expostulate. My business is not to speak smooth things, but to say some things that you may resist fight, get angry with ; and you may get angry with me for saying them, but they are here, and it is my business to say, " Thus saith the Lord." There is no intelligent conversion without an intelligent understanding of these words. May the Holy

Spirit breathe light upon these truths, and help us to see them! For it is my business to make you see what God means when He says, "Repent ye."

I am afraid that in our zeal to get people into the kingdom or the Church we have lowered the standard. These words meant far more when they were uttered than they do to-day with most people. I am afraid the familiar way with which we use them and the constant contact with them and with the daily handling of them, we have somehow allowed their edge to be worn off. They do not mean as much to us. The depth, the breadth, the height, the length of these mighty utterances do not search us and illuminate and startle, and thrill and overwhelm as they used to. But they do mean as much. If we have not eyes to see and ears to hear, if by long contamination with evil, and soothing the conscience with opiates from hell, if crying, "Peace" where there is no peace has brought a stupor upon us, that is our reponsibility, not God's or His Word's. God means as much by these words to-day when He says, "Repent ye," as He did when they were first uttered. I am afraid we have brought them down, we have lowered them, we have

pulled them from their heights down to the low levels of our own poor experiences. But that is not the way to climb with measured step the hills of light, and walk in unbroken fellowship with God. I am afraid that in our zeal to get people into what we call the Church we have been more anxious about heads than hearts. In order to capture, we have compromised and lost. We have been more concerned about filling our Church registers than we have about the kingdom. We have not sufficiently emphasized the greatness of coming to Christ, and we have said, "It is only a step." Who told you so? Only a step to Jesus? It is not true. It is not gospel. Only a step to Jesus? Then it is a very big step. We have made it a very little thing, and we have multitudes of people joining the Churches. It is child's play. It used not to be. When I came to Christ I came under the old Act. It was a conflict, it was a warfare, it was a pilgrimage, it was a struggle, it was cutting off the right arm and plucking out the right eye, it was being maimed if necessary. It meant sacrifice. There was a day in our calendar called Good Friday; there was a place called Calvary. It meant coming out, being forsaken, abused,

slandered, rejected, despised, hated, persecuted, a fool for Christ's sake, sneered at, laughed at, misrepresented, suffering the cross. What does it mean now? A picnic. It is a "social," it is an entertainment, it is a guild, an ordinance; and with multitudes of people who call themselves Christians it means nothing more. We have made it too easy, but Jesus never made it so: He never deluded anybody. He never cried "Peace" where there was no peace. He knew the danger of saying "Peace" when the soul was in anarchy and the will in rebellion, and the whole man against God. He could not cry "Peace."

No, He never made it easy. We have said to anybody and everybody, "Only believe." The New Testament does not say so. The devil believes, and believes more than you do; in his heart he knows more about it. He believes; and if he says he does not, he is a liar, he is shamming. He believes far more than any of us, but he is not a saint. Jesus has never made it easy. There was one man who came and asked, "Are there few that be saved?" and He said, "Strive, struggle, agonize to enter in at the strait gate." He never made it easy. Here is

another man who came and said, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." But Jesus knew he had not counted the cost, and said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Here is another who came and said, "Lord, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus diagnosed the case instantly, and put His finger on the weak spot of his life and said, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me." He did not make it easy. Here is another man who came and said, "Lord, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus said to him, "Ye must be born again." And to the multitude of people who listened to Him He said, "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and deny himself." He never made it easy; and the man who makes it easy to be a Christian preaches a mongrel gospel. Jesus said, "Repent." John preached repentance. He came to preach it. It had the first place in his sermons. It was first and last with John, "Repent, repent." You say it is too startling,

sensational, vulgar; but remember, it was God's vulgarity. "Repent." No man who preaches as John did will be popular.

They put John in prison for preaching repentance, and so that the doctrine should not be silent, as soon as John was shut up Jesus began where John left off, and His first public sermon to the world was on repentance. He knew where to begin. "Repent ye," said Jesus. That is His first utterance, and if you care to go to His last before He left His disciples and was received up yonder in the clouds, He gave them the commission to go and preach repentance. So that in the first and the last utterances of the Son of God you have repentance enforced. And when He was back again on the throne, when angels and archangels had received Him with the shouts of triumph and welcome which He deserved, when He had been exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance, as though He knew that some of us would shrink from driving it in, as though He knew that some of us would be afraid to push it home. He said to Saul, "Saul, you go to the Gentiles and make them—*make them*—do works meet for repentance."

Jesus never made it easy. Let any man who

ever tried honestly but one day in his life to serve God with all his powers, let him tell me if it was an easy thing to do. It is not easy. It is a struggle, it is a fight. Jesus Christ on Calvary is not a substitute for the life He means you to live, but the means by which you get the power to live the life. No, there is no salvation without repentance. This is the first step. First things first. And the man who misses repentance will miss everything. If your repentance is shallow your religious life will be shallow. If your coming to Christ does not mean everything you will not get everything. If your surrender is not complete you cannot receive. If your hands are filled you cannot take hold. It is only those who come empty-handed that can cling. It is only those who turn from darkness to light that understand God. It is only those who leave the devil who can receive God. No, we must repent.

"Then," you say, "what is repentance?" Listen—it is not conviction. It is possible to be convicted without repentance. Why, it is hardly possible to meet and talk with anybody in these days but at some moment of their life's history they have been convicted of their need of Christ.

It is hardly possible to meet with anybody who does not know what he ought to do and what he ought to be. You cannot meet and talk with any man that has not light about these things; but light is not life.

What brings you to a mission service? Deep down in your conscience, the soul of you, the man of you, back of everything, hid away that nobody else can see, there is a real cry in your soul for God. That is conviction. That is God-given; that is Holy Ghost-brought, that is the result of the light that flashes over the cliff-tops of eternity, that is the soul's awakening. It is one thing to be awake, it is another thing to get up. You have often heard your minister preach. Maybe you have been hearing him for years. Perhaps you sit in the gallery or away back in one of the pews, or near to him, and every time he preaches and you hear him, you go home and say, "My pastor is right; I ought to be a Christian, I know I ought," and you feel beneath the powerful pleadings of your own pastor, beneath the pleadings of the evangelist, you know God's claims, you admit them, you feel them. They are right, they are reasonable, and you ought to surrender. That is conviction. But it is one

thing to be convicted and another thing to repent. Conviction is not repentance.

What is repentance? It is not sorrow. Sorrow for sin is one element of repentance, but you can be sorry without repentance. There is a kind of sentimental sorrow, a sorrow at the thought of coming retribution and exposure, which is mean, selfish, devilish, and is not healthy and life-giving. There is a sorrow that weeps at funerals and sentimental plays, and weeps beneath the ordinary preaching and the special preaching. There are multitudes of people who think they are not far from the kingdom because their tears come easily; they whisper all sorts of sweet messages to themselves because they can weep. They tell themselves they are not hard, and therefore there must be hope for them, and all the while they are holding on to forbidden things and walking in forbidden paths, and keeping company with those who are destroying them and leading them far from God. It is no good to cover God's altar with tears while your heart is in rebellion. It is no good to hold out one hand apparently to the Cross with the other holding on to a black hand behind you. You cannot hold Dagon in one hand and the

ELIJAH V. STIVERS

Ark of the Covenant in the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. It is no good to sing on Sunday with your face towards the Cross and on Monday with your feet towards the beershop.

I sat in a home a few days ago playing with a boy of ten. His face was bright as the sun. He looked as happy as any child in the home, calling me "Uncle." Presently his mother had missed something, and she came in and said, "Jack, have you taken so-and-so?" His head dropped. "Jack, have you taken so-and-so?" No answer. "Jack"—and she came and put her hand on his shoulder—"did you take ——" "Yes, mother;" and he began to cry. Oh, he was sorry; he did look sorry; he sobbed as though his heart would break. What for? He was just as guilty five minutes before, and he knew he was. What made him sorry? Sorry that he had sinned against his mother? No. Sorry that he had sinned against God? No. Well, what was his sorrow? He was sorry because he was found out. And there are multitudes of professing Christians whose religious sorrow is no deeper. That is the sorrow that worketh death. There is a godly sorrow, sorrow because I have sinned against God. "Against

Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight. . . . For Thou desirest truth in the hidden parts, honesty where no eye but Thine can see, transparency where no light but Thine can penetrate." There is a sorrow that means death. There is a sorrow for sin that worketh life. Which is yours?

What is repentance? Listen. It is not promising to be better. There are plenty of people who have been promising to be better ever since they can remember, from boyhood or girlhood. When God has laid His hand upon them, as He does in a thousand ways, they are ready to promise, and do promise. Where are you, you who have been making promises till your hair is gray and broken every one of them, and angels beholding your shattered promises have shuddered to the tips of their wings? You are further from God than ever you were in your life, with all your promises. Your psalm-singing and your hymn-singing, and your church-going, and your offerings, and all the rest of your religious paraphernalia, are so much mockery because you have not walked the straight and blessed path of obedience and trust.

It is not enough to promise. It means more

than that. If it is not conviction, if it is not sorrow, if it is not the desire to be better and the promise to be better, what is it? What is repentance? Is it crying? No. Is it excitement? No. Is it emotion? Is it kneeling down and groaning? No. Is it going and hearing preachers? No.

What is it? Listen. Jesus Christ tells you in that beautiful picture in the fifteenth of Luke. It is a wonderful chapter. There are three cases in that chapter—the silver, the sheep, and the son. The sheep was lost out of the fold, the silver was lost in the house. The sheep was lost without any intention of being lost, but it was lost. The silver was lost in the house through somebody's carelessness, and it may be there is somebody lost in your house, in your pew in the church, through somebody's carelessness. God help you to find out who that somebody is! The son was lost, and it was his own fault. He was a prodigal before he left home. He was a rebel before he got a penny of his fortune. He was as bad in heart and in mind before he received a cent of the money as when he had spent it all. He was guilty the moment he said to himself, "I will demand the portion of goods

that falleth to me." When the sheep went astray a man went after it. When the silver was lost a woman went after it. When the son went astray nobody went after him. How is that? Remember who told the story. Nobody went for him. How is that? Because he was a man, because he was a moral agent, because he was accountable to God for his own act. Why did not the father gather his servants with the elder brother, why did he not gather his neighbours together, and say, "Look here, I have lost my boy, let us go and find him and bring him back in spite of himself"? Why did he not? Because if they had brought him back again he would have been a prodigal still, he would have been a rebel inside the house as well as out of it, for no man comes till he returns; and heaven and the Bible, Christ and Calvary, the Holy Ghost and eternity stand absolutely defeated before the citadel of the human will. Do not forget it. Listen. The prodigal went astray, took every step from the homestead of his own deliberate choice, step by step away up into the far country, and he had to come to himself, he had to come back every inch of the way, and he did not send a letter home to his father and say, "If

you will send the old chariot I will come home," and he did not ask anybody to give him a lift. He had to walk back every inch his own self, step by step, with bleeding feet and aching head, and broken heart. He had to do it. "But," you say, "the father ran to meet him, did he not?" Yes, he did, and He will run to meet you when He sees you coming, but you must come. Coming is repentance. It is the response of the will. Repentance is the response of the enlightened, redeemed man to the call of God, the "I will" of the soul. It is putting your hand on your heart and getting hold of what has been your curse, the thing that has chained you. It is getting hold of the thing that has made hell of earth for you, the sin of your heart—for I have discovered that there may be a dozen sins in a man's life, but there are not a dozen that predominate; there is one overmastering, predominating, all-prevailing sin that enslaves and damns, and if that sin goes everything goes. It is putting your hand in your heart and plucking that out by the hair of its head and saying to God, "That it is, and I will die before I will sin again." Have you repented in that fashion? Don't talk about Church membership, don't in-

sult God by talking about the Communion until you have done this: this is the first thing and the others will not be expected until you have done this.

"Repent ye," make a full surrender to God.

Brother, listen to me once more. Repentance, when it is done, is such a beautiful thing that Jesus Himself said, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Have you repented along that line? There are some of you who do not understand how it is you have no peace and no joy in your profession. I know, just as well as if I lived with you, I know if you have no joy and no peace in your professed faith it is because you have never turned to God wholly. Some of you say, "I want peace." Never mind peace; do as you are told, and peace will come. There are some people more concerned about nice feelings, happy feelings, ecstasies and joys, and all the rest of it, than they are about putting God in His place. You put God in His place, and you will have peace; you honour God, and you will have peace.

A dear fellow came to me when I was in South Africa, and he said, "Sir, I want to get

relief from a guilty conscience," and he had an awful story to tell, a story that made me shudder. He unfolded a page in his history that I dare not tell you. Then he said, "Sir, I want God's pardon." I said, "My brother, how do you expect to get it?" He said, "By an honest attempt to undo the past." "Then," I said, "turn your face that way and wait for peace." "But," he said, "that will mean prison, and it may mean a lifetime in prison." I said, "Turn your face that way. It is no good to talk about peace while there is wrong to be righted, while there are stripes that need to be washed; it is no use to talk about peace till you get right with God. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace." Righteousness, that means rightness, wholeness, harmony—and then the music. There will be no music till the instrument is put in tune. You know where you have to yield; you know the point of controversy between you and God; you know the thing that has hindered you, you know the thing that robbed you, you know the thing that has darkened your sky, you know the thing that has come in between you and God, you know the thing about which you have persisted in having

your own way and not God's. When you yield on that thing, you will repent.

Will you do it now? "But," you say, "I am a Church member." Never mind. You say there is some one near that knows you. Never mind. You say people expect better things of you. Never mind. Be honest. Put God in His right place. Turn from sin to God, from darkness to light—and you can do the turning. The Spirit enlightens, the Spirit breeds tenderness, the Spirit coaxes, woos, tries to win. God the Holy Ghost is doing His work in your heart, but, brother, you must submit. When you submit wholly, that is repentance. God help you to do it!

III

BORN AGAIN

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."
—*John 3 : 7.*

III

BORN AGAIN

In my last address I spoke about repentance, and I tried to show you that repentance is something that we must do if we mean to be saved, that God commands it, that it is a universal command, that it is immediate.

Now my theme goes a little further. I want to speak about something that must be done in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, for "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

Then, if that be true, I am not surprised that Jesus said with all the emphasis of the Godhead to this man, "*Ye must be born again.*" You may read it this way, if you will—"Ye must be born anew," or this way, "Ye must be born from above." Whichever way you take it, it means a new creature, the heart all wrong made right; it means the source of the life must be put right and in harmony with God, and the life flowing out of it purified, new created. The centre must

be in harmony with the will of God. "A new creature," "a new creation," the life above brought into and lived out upon earth.

Now there are many people who think the Lord can make them good somehow or other just when they are going to die. Now I claim if the Lord can do that just when I am going to die He can do it while I am living, and if He cannot do it while I am living He cannot do it when I am going to die. And I claim that the Lord can make every man and every woman good, so good that He can look from His throne on the work of His hands and pronounce it good, and be pleased with it. Some of you say, "I don't believe it." I do. If He could make Adam good out of nothing He can make you good out of what is left. On reading these words, please put the emphasis on the words *must* and *again*. "Ye *must* be born *again*." Now don't fight me because I bring this old-fashioned truth and press it home upon your conscience. Don't get angry with me because I try to make you face the great doctrine of the new birth. Don't turn up your nose and act as though you had outgrown this. This man probably knew more than you do, and perhaps he was a far bet-

ter moral man than you are, and probably he had a better standing in the Church and in society than any of us. But Jesus Christ could not spare him, and did not spare him. He loved him too much to compromise. He did not lower the standard, and He could not make the way into the kingdom of His grace easy, not even for a master in Israel. Do not, I beseech you, think that this is an old-fashioned theme. I know it is, but it is the only theme. I know it is an old story, but it is the only story. If you have got a soul and an appetite, it is as new as the sunshine that streams through the gates of the morning. It is as fresh as the dewdrops that hang like so many of God's diamonds, sparkling in the sunshine. It is as beautiful as the roses on a June morning, it is as fresh as a breath from the hills of God. It is not stale, it is not played out, it is not old-fashioned. It is a spring that never runs dry; it is a power, and the only power, that can break fetters and can snap chains, that can open blind eyes and cure wounded lives, that can hush storms and still tempests. It is the power that can lift men from sin and ruin, utter and complete, back again to God. Oh, for the power to emphasize it!

I know there are some people who think we are antiquated when we preach the new birth—old-fashioned, harmless perhaps, but a little to be pitied. Brother, they will sing about this around the steps of the throne. Old-fashioned? It is the song that keeps heaven warm. The central attraction of the skies is He who hung on the nails. As you walk down some picture gallery and view a special masterpiece of some old artist, world-famed and celebrated, so when you reach heaven, if you get there, and walk through the picture-gallery of the skies, the picture that will stand out and outshine and live and thrill and attract its millions will be the picture of the cross and its dying Saviour. Don't think you have got beyond the teaching of the new birth, and don't dare to say we do not need that. Don't you? What, not after that company you kept last Saturday? Don't you? What, not after what happened to-day in the city? Not after what you did to-day in your office or home? Why, some of you have got a letter in your pocket that you would be ashamed to let me see. God reads every line. Listen: "Ye must be born again." That is what is the matter with you. You want a new heart. God looks at the heart.

This is not my word; Jesus said it. That is what I want you to see, that if you turn up your nose at the message or sneer at the preacher when he announces the text, "Ye must be born again," or if you think you have got beyond it, that it is out of date, and old-fashioned, will you remember that He who is the Jewel for which this vast universe is the mere setting turned aside from the manufacture of worlds and the controlling of the universe, stepped aside from it all to whisper this into the heart of dying humanity. Jesus said it—not the preacher, but Jesus.

And this doctrine does not belong to the Methodist Church any more than it does to the Baptist Church, and it does not belong to the Episcopalian Church any more than it does to the Salvation Army. They all preach it—that is, if they are loyal to Christ—and they live it as they follow Him. They cannot help it. This is as old as the hills, a little older than the Church. John Wesley preached from this text, but he did not invent it, and the Methodist Church is the monument and the outcome of that mighty preaching. George Whitefield preached from this text, and preached from it three hundred times, but he did not invent it. General

Booth, one of the most wonderful men God ever gave to the world, who with his band of consecrated followers has belted the globe with a golden cable of song of salvation, and will take tens of thousands from the slums and sewers of city life to walk the streets of the New Jerusalem in white, he preached from it, but he did not invent it. It is no human invention. Jesus Christ said it. Do not forget that. If you will realize who uttered these words you will learn to respect them, and you will uncover your head and bow before them; if, then, you cannot comprehend the infinity of them, you will in silence cease your criticism. If you would fathom their depths and scale their heights and measure their immensity, if you do not grasp all they mean, you will be silent; you will say in your heart, "If God has a message in them for me, then, Holy Spirit, make it plain."

Now will you notice, please, to whom He said it? To whom did Jesus say these words? A drunkard? No. A harlot? No. A murderer? No. An outcast of society? No. A poor gipsy? No. I think if Jesus were to come and speak a message to a gipsy tent, knowing its past and how much it has been despised, how

little people have cared, and how little people have done to save its occupants, He would speak very tenderly. To whom, then, did Jesus say these words? Listen. A church member. So you see it is possible to be a church member without being born again. Henry Drummond said during the second Moody campaign, in writing to his friend Professor Barbour, "The enquiry room this time, as before, reveals the awful fact that the vast majority of Church members know nothing about the new birth. They know the letter of the law as well as they know their own names, but they are as ignorant of free grace as a Hottentot." It is possible to have your name down in the Church register without having it in the Lamb's Book of Life. It is possible to take the cup of communion and never take the cup of salvation. Jesus uttered these words first of all to a member of the Church, an office-bearer of the Church of his day, a member of the inner circle, a prince, leader, and master in the Church, but he was not born again; not a child, an old man. Think of that. It startled him, it made him think; and I would to God you would think. If I can only get a man to think, I have done

something. The greatest difficulty a preacher has is to get men to think.

When Christ said these words to this man he began to think in a moment, and he said, "What, can a man be born when he is old?" That is a very pertinent question. It is possible to be saved when you are an old man. It is possible, but it is improbable. It is possible, but it will be difficult. You ask my brethren in the ministry how often they see a gray-head join the Church, man or woman. For every gray-head that comes to them for Church membership they will tell you that fifty under twenty-five will come. And I have seen a few hundreds, a few thousands, come to Christ; the exception is a gray-head. The majority of people who come to Jesus are under twenty-five, and if you go over twenty-five, to thirty, you will have less. If you go between thirty and forty you will have less, and if between forty and fifty you will have less still, and if between fifty and sixty less again, and if you go between sixty and seventy you may write it down wonderful when they come. What does it mean, gray-heads? It means that you can say "No" to Christ till you lose the desire to say "Yes." That is what it means.

"Can a man be born when he is old?" Try to learn the piano when you have passed sixty, and see if it is easy when your joints are grown fixed and stiff. And if it is not easy, what about this, the hardest study of all, the study to show yourself approved unto God? Don't think, my friend growing old, that you can crowd out of your life the things of God, the things of the day of judgment, the things of right, and holiness, and heaven —don't think that you can shut them out of your life, and then crowd them into the last five minutes of your existence. Eternal matters will demand a little longer attention. "Can a man be born when he is old?" Listen. Yes, he may, for when God says it, it must be. He says it may be. But it will be a miracle. I rejoice if a gray-head comes to Christ, but I rejoice more if a boy comes.

Some time ago I was in a large testimony meeting in connection with the Church of which I am a member, and a man got up and told us how God had saved him, and he had been a burglar and spent so many years in prison. When he sat down up got his chum who sat beside him, and he told us with trembling voice and with tears that in 1881 he was before the

grand jury for murder, and that he had been in prison about twenty years, but God had saved him. He said, "The jury knew I was guilty, but the drink was in me. The judge knew it too; the drink was in me when I did it, and my youth saved me from hanging, and God has saved me." When he sat down another man rose, and he said, "I had been a drunkard for twenty years, and the Lord saved me." And when he sat down up got another, and he said, "I have been a coiner of base money, and God has saved me." And then another got up and told us he had been a prize-fighter and fought so many battles and won every time, and God had saved him. And then another man got up and said, "I have had a checkered career. I have ridden about Manchester with the present Prime Minister, and I have ridden in the police van. I have been a publican, and I have swept the floors for other publicans. I have been drunk on champagne, and I have begged a penny for a drink. I have dined with aldermen, and I have begged a crust in the street." And then he told us how Jesus had saved him. So they went on, and I could not sit still any longer. I got up and said, "Men, listen. God has done wonders for you,

but don't forget He did more for this gipsy boy than all of you put together: He saved me before I got there." Prevention is better than cure. I believe a fence at the top of a precipice is better than a hospital at the bottom. "Can a man be born when he is old?" Yes, he may, but God save the children!

"Ye must be." Then I can understand some of you saying, just as this man said, "Lord Jesus, blessed Jesus, I don't want to intrude, but how is it to be? Tell me how it works. Explain it. I cannot see it." No, and you never will see it. "I cannot understand it." No, and you will never understand it, but He will. Your finite mind grasp the Infinite? Don't expect it. "If I could only see it, if I could only see through the process, I would believe it." But you never will see through the process of it. You can believe yourself through, you can obey yourself through, you can conform to the purpose and the will of God and get through, but you will never get through on your own speculating and asking impertinent questions. That is not the way.

"Oh," says a man, "tell me about this thing, show me how the new birth works." You ex-

plain electricity to me, or sit in the dark till you understand it, and never ride in an electric car till you can understand it. Explain the dewdrop, tell me how the thunder and the lightning slumber in the dewdrop. You cannot tell. Analyze the raindrop. You cannot, but God fathers it. Tell me how He kisses the little bit of black earth in your garden, and after He has kissed it a bunch of primroses blooms. Tell me how He did it, or stop your quibbles about this. Here is an easy one. Tell me how He came to my gipsy tent, when there was not a Bible, before I could spell my name, before I had ever heard of Him. That is the wonder. Tell me how He got hold of my father, that grand old saint, when he was rough and raw, drunken, swearing, wild, and lion-like. Tell me how God in Christ got hold of him and won the children and saved us all and made these eyes, these inner eyes of my life, see Him and know He was my Saviour. Tell me how, will you? I do not know how, but I know He did it, and that is enough to go on with. Never mind the how of it. It must be—must be.

Well now, let me stop here and ask this question—Are you born again? Can you close your

eyes at this moment and say, "Yes, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"? Can you say, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in me. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"? Can you say that?

> "No condemnation now I dread,
> Jesus and all in Him is mine;
> Alive in Him my living head
> Clothed in His righteousness divine.
> Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
> And claim the crown through Christ my own."

Can you say it? Are you born again? What did you say—you are a Church member? That is no substitute for the new birth. What did you say—you are an office-bearer? Are you a master of Israel, and know not these things? Dare you walk about God's heritage, with unclean hands handling holy things? Dare you strut in God's house with a filthy heart? O God, find us out!

Are you born again? What did you say—you are a Sunday-school teacher? You would not be a Sunday-school teacher in my Church if I were a minister unless I had evidence that you were born again. I would refuse to let any class of boys and girls be led by a blind leader. You have no right there till you are born again.

Are you born again? Have you got the witness within? Lord Jesus, help us to be honest! Now have you the witness of the blessed Spirit that speaks within, that gives the knowledge the head cannot, that gives the assurance that the world knows nothing about, that makes glad and warm the heart and bright and cheerful the life, that gives confidence and hope and heaven? Have you got it? Because if you are born again you have got it.

Listen. Here are some of the new birth marks: "He that is born of God loveth the brethren." Is that mark on you? Here is another: "He that is born of God abideth in Him." That is another mark. Is that on you? Here is another: "He that is born of God overcometh the world." Is that mark on you? Here is another: "He that is born of God keepeth himself in the love of God." Is that mark

on you? Here is another: "He that is born of God hath the witness in himself."

Now you may go to church. There may be movement—you can make a dead body move if you put enough batteries underneath it—but if there is movement and you are not born again it is only the movement of a galvanized corpse. "Ye must be born again." Are you born again? Are you sure of it? Can you look Him in the face by faith and say—

> "My Jesus to know, and to feel His blood flow—
> 'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below"?

Our fathers and mothers sang that, and God forbid that we should ever outgrow the song. Do you know it? Have you the witness? because you will have it when you meet the conditions. Have you seen a mother with her new baby, her first baby? One of the most beautiful sights in the world is a pure mother with a beautiful baby. Her heart is its school, its nursery. The baby lives and moves and has its being in her love. In the day she watches it, in the night she dreams of it. It is first and last thought with her. She feeds it, she fondles it, coaxes it, talks to it, tells it a thousand things that the baby

understands, or seems to. And, loved and petted and fondled, in a few months baby, taught and loved by the mother's heart, lisps, "Dada." Exactly; and just like that the Holy Ghost comes down into the new-born, new-surrendered, new-believing, obedient heart and coaxes it into saying, "Abba, Father, my Lord and my God." This is the new birth.

You may know the glorious bliss, you may know the triumphant victory, you may have the new song in your soul now. You may put your foot on the neck of your foe this hour. You my stand up God's man, God's woman, free forever, *now*, if you will meet the conditions. God help you! "It must be." Stop your arguing, stop your questioning; that is the old way of defeat and failure, doubt and unbelief. That is the devil's way. Listen to me. Come to Jesus this hour, bow before Him and say to Him in your own way, "Lord Jesus, whatever there is in this message for me, help me to receive it." That is the way. Do not think you can live the new life with the old heart. It cannot be. A new life means a new heart, and you will get it all at the Cross.

IV

THE SAVIOUR OF ALL

"A man with an unclean spirit."—*Mark 5 : 2.*

"A certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years."—*Mark 5 : 25.*

"One of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus . . . besought Him, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death."—*Mark 5 : 22, 23.*

IV

THE SAVIOUR OF ALL

I WANT to speak about the three hopeless cases in the fifth chapter of Mark's Gospel. It is a chapter of incurables, if we speak after the manner of men. The first is the man possessed by the devil. We are told he had his dwelling among the tombs. No man could bind him; that he had often been bound with fetters and chains but had shaken them off like cobwebs; that he was in the tombs and mountains night and day crying out in his misery, cutting himself with stones in his agony; that he was a terror to the neighbourhood, wounded, naked, stripped, ostracized, alienated, lonely, suffering, sad, possessed by the devil. And this is but a sample case of what the devil would do with every man if he had his way. This is a photograph, a full-length photograph, taken by God's camera in all its ugly detail, in all its mass of misery of what the devil would do with you and with me but for the hand that keeps him back. For the devil is

like God in this, he is no respecter of persons. When you see a poor creature in the gutter, vile of lip, bloody of cheek, blear-eyed, lost in mind, heart, body, soul, you can say to yourself, "I would be there but for grace." The devil delights in ruin, discord, destruction; and I verily believe he is devil enough, if he had his own way, to put his foot on London, strangle it, and then chuckle like the fiend he is over the havoc he has wrought. Oh, there is a devil to fight. Some people say there is no devil. There is a good deal that is like one, and you cannot travel very far without seeing a good deal of devilishness. And if you say there is no devil you must forgive me if I tell you it is because you never tried to do right. It is easy to swim with the stream. A dead fish can do that. It takes a living fish to go against the stream. When a man is asleep in stupor you may put chains about him and he is insensible, he does not know. But he does know when he wakes up; and if to-night you make up your mind that, God helping you, you will hate the wrong and turn your back on it, and set your face Godward and heavenward to do right, you will be convinced there is a devil before the morning.

There is a devil, and he means your ruin. But, blessed be God, Jesus is not only God's Lamb slain, He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He lives to destroy the power of the devil.

In this first case the man whom friends and neighbours could not tame, the man that no power on earth had managed to grip and hold in, Jesus the Saviour in a moment transformed, turned his hell into heaven, his darkness to light, and made him a son of God, an heir of heaven.

And Jesus is still that—Lord over devils; and if the devil is in you Jesus can cast him out. Whatever devil possesses you, whatever of destructiveness, ruin and evil is in you, whatever of night and despair, chains and darkness are upon you, whatever devil has got hold of you and rules you and is destroying you, whatever that devil is, Jesus Christ will conquer if you will but give Him a chance, for He is still the wonder-working Jesus.

The second case is one of disease; and mark you, this case was as bad as could be. She had suffered for twelve years with a shamefaced disease, and nobody could help her. All the medical men around had tried, and they were not all frauds. There were those who would have healed

if they could. They would have made a reputation if they could have diagnosed her case, if they could have arrested and healed. But they failed. Their fingers were not long enough, they could not reach the mischief, they did not understand it, it was beyond them. Their sympathies might be ever so great, but they were baffled. She suffered many things of many physicians. She tried them all, and when her hopes rose a little with some expectation of relief it was only to fall back again into a deeper disappointment, a greater mental suffering. But on the heels of everybody else's failure Jesus proves Himself Lord over disease. And Jesus is still that. Some day there will be no disease; some day there will be no raging epidemic; some day there will be no fever; some day there will be perfect health, robust, round, full-orbed, strong health. We shall be like Him—and He is healthy enough—for we shall see Him as He is. And in proportion as we get like Him here disease will disappear, for Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. If there had been no sin there would have been no disease. There would have been no suffering if it had not been for the breaking of the law. You may give me those

three letters and I will spell all the misery and suffering, all the pain and agony, every woe and pang and heartache—S-I-N. And you cannot say "sin" without hearing the hiss of the serpent. Take sin up into the fields of glory, let it climb the streets of light, let it take up its abode in God's fair fields of health where the flowers never fade and where the sun always shines, let sin take its roots in the glory, and you will have to build a graveyard, for "the wages of sin is death." Sin makes you pinched in face, sin makes the eye recede, sin makes the step infirm and faltering, it makes the hand nerveless and unsteady, clouds the brow, dims the eye, and weakens the heart. Sin is the greatest heart disease the world ever knew. Sin darkens the morning and clouds the evening. Sin—the Lord help us to see it as He sees it! But, blessed be God, one interview with Jesus cured this woman's ills; one living, vital moment of contact with Him ended her trouble. And Jesus is still Lord of disease.

That is not all. You can do something with the man if the devil is in him, for if a man is filled with the devil there are moments in his life when you can reach him, there are moments in the worst man's life when, if you know how to

take him, you will arrest him. For there is, if you dig deep enough, in every man the bed-rock, built by the fingers that built the eternities, and it is our business to find it. There is in every man the spark that will blaze when suns faint and go out like sparks from a blacksmith's anvil. Every man is therefore worth saving.

You can do something with the poor, weakly, suffering body of a woman while she is alive, for the doctors will tell you that while there is life there is hope, but what are you going to do with a dead body?—and the third case is death. The woman had suffered twelve years, how long the devil had been in that man I do not know, but the little child was twelve years old, and she was dead. Ay, but Jesus is never conquered; He is always the conqueror, He is always equal to every emergency. You never knew Him defeated; and if you want to see Him at His best you want to see Him with a difficult case. And He went up to that little child and got hold of her hand. And He looked her in the face and He said, "Damsel, arise." If He had said "Arise," without saying "Damsel," there would have been a general resurrection; they would have all come to see which one He meant. But

that eye of His which is the light of the world went into the gloom beyond and singled out that little spirit and said, "Damsel, arise." And she sat up, and He said to her mother, "Give her something to eat." So that in the third case He proved Himself Lord of death. In that one chapter of forty-three verses you have got all you need—Lord over disease, devils, and death, the all-conquering Christ, gospel enough to save the world.

That is the programme of redemption. Let me turn it round once more. The man, the woman, the child—what does it mean? This—Jesus is the man's Saviour; that is what it means. There is not a man that can do without Him. There is not a man that does without Him. You may think you do, but no man lives without Jesus. You may not acknowledge Him, indeed you may deny Him, but He is there, nearer than the seat you are sitting on, nearer than the clothes you wear, nearer than the food you eat, nearer than the child you love and about whom you put your arms, nearer than the friend on whose arm you lean. You may deny, but He is there; you drink from His fountain, you feed from His table, you walk about His world, every

bit of which is marked by His own cross. You cannot do without Him, and you do not do without Him. If you think you can, will you prove it by creating a planet and then go and live on it? Don't talk about doing without Him while you depend on Him for every breath you draw. He is the man's Christ, and, brother, no man is at his best till he is Christ's. No man can be, no man can do, what God means him to be and to do till he is Christ's man. And it is not a childish thing to be a Christian. It is a manly thing, it is a noble thing; it is not a weak thing —if you think it is, try it. If you think it is a weak thing to be a Christian, make up your mind to be one and go and tell them where you work to-morrow that you have given your heart to God, and you will see it takes courage and moral force, backbone and will-power, and intelligence. Cotton wool won't do it, jellyfish won't do it; cowards won't do it; it will take a man to do it. You try it. You think it is a sentimental thing to be a Christian. Try it. Religion is all right for Sunday-schools, mothers' meetings, and parsons, some of you think. It is a manly thing, it is a noble thing, it is a brave thing to be a Christian. Don't forget it, Christ

is a man's Saviour. The strange and wonderful thing to me is that it does not matter who the man is or where he comes from, what his nationality, what his education, birth or breeding, what his culture, or what his outlook may be, the moment he looks into the face of Jesus he says, "My Lord and my God." Every man sees in Him all he needs. When he does see Him, whether he be a gipsy in his tent or a prime minister, whether he be a collier or a king, it does not matter, the man that looks into the face of Jesus has found the spring that never runs dry, and he can say with that illustrious saint —

> "Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
> More than all in Thee I find."

He is the man's Saviour, and the wickedest thing in the world, men, is to know that and to refuse to serve Him. That is the sin that damns. You need not get drunk, you need not let loose your passions, you need not be a sower of uncleanness. You can be a respectable, church-going, well-dressed, moral sort of man, and refuse the claims of the Son of God, refuse to allow Him the right of way within and without of your

life, refuse to give Him the right place, refuse to fall down and worship Him and enthrone Him within you. That is the sin which damns—the sin that sets Him at nought, the sin that refuses to love and to obey. O man, father, brother, young man, I covet your manhood for Christ. He is worthy of your best thought, your purest thought, your noblest thought, your most brilliant thought, your most lofty conception, your gladdest day, your strongest heart-throb, your most manly moment. Give Him the alabaster box of precious ointment. All He has given you, return it to Him in love and gratitude and consecration, I beseech you, for He is the man's Saviour.

Ay, but that is not all; He is the woman's Christ too. Jesus has not forgotten the women. Some of you men say that religion will do for women. Thank God, it will; and it is a blessing some of them have got a bit of religion. They do not get much comfort from the man they have to call husband. It is a blessing some women have got Jesus to look to, or I do not think they could live at all. Have you forgotten that you promised God at His altar to take care of her you call wife? how you promised to

shield her, to love and honour? Have you forgotten that you promised God in the most public, solemn manner before His altar and the recording angel that you would forsake everything for that woman? Have you forgotten it? because God will make you remember it some day. God has not forgotten it. She is nearly dead. Do you know it, O man? Listen. There is another way of murdering a woman beside blowing her brains out or cutting her throat. Poor woman, suffering woman, weeping woman, your hair gray long before it ought to be, your face pinched and your back bent, and you do not know what it is to have a moment's peace, and in your sleep you dream of misery, full of tears and disappointments and agonies—Jesus knows, my sister. God help you to make Him your friend! He knows, He knows. When sometimes you smile—and you are forced to smile because others are there—when you have got sorrow enough behind, storm enough behind that smile to wreck a navy, He knows. He is the woman's Christ. If you will let Him, He will kiss your tears into jewels. The sun of His love will light up your face once more, and if the wrinkles do not go He will make them beautiful, and if your

back does not straighten He will give you grace to bear the burden and the flowers of paradise shall bloom again in your poor, wasted life, for the "wilderness shall blossom, it shall blossom abundantly." Ay, He is the woman's Saviour. I do not know how any woman can turn her back on Jesus or keep Him out of her life. It is a sad thing when a woman says "No" to Christ, but when she is the cause of her children saying "No" it is sadder still. O mothers, O sisters, for Christ's sake and for your children's sake and for your husbands' sake open your heart to Jesus! Let Him take the throne-place in your heart. Nobody will be as true as He, nobody will stand by you as He will. You can tell Him what you cannot tell anybody else. You love Him, you serve Him, you follow Him, and though others sneer and frown and treat you coolly and despise and call you a sinner, He will say, "Woman, thy sins are forgiven thee." He is the woman's Christ.

But that is not all. If I stopped there it would not be complete. He is the baby's Saviour, He is the child's Christ, He is the cradle Christ. And if you want to beat the devil you must fight him with the cradle. Oh, that every mother

would bring her babies to Jesus! "But," you say, "they are so little." Yes, but He is the God of little things. He painted the rainbow—yes, but He kissed the daisy into being too. He put the wings on the archangel, but He feathered the sparrow. The mighty ocean—yes, but He makes that out of the same material that He makes the dewdrop. He is the God of little things. Don't despise the children. I would that I could take the dear little hearts and twist them into a garland of beauty and in all their innocence place their young affections on the head of my Lord. "Suffer little children to come unto Me." Jesus has not forgotten them. God save the children! Don't hinder them, don't stop them, don't get into the way of them; let them come.

He is the man's Christ. Brother, is He your Christ? He wants to be, He will be if you will take Him, He will be if you will follow Him, He will be if you will come out from what He hates, forsake that which grieves Him, that which killed Him. Forsake it, follow Him, and you will find that Jesus Christ can do for a man what you never dreamed He could.

Woman, sister, you of the weary life, you of

the disappointments, you of the sleepless nights and weary days, you of the heart faintness and hunger, Jesus waits to come into your life and transform it into a thing of beauty. Will you let Him?

And He is the child's Christ, and the children understand Him. Don't stop the children from coming. I have a letter in my possession from a high Government official in one of the colonies of South Africa, written a few days after my mission in his city, in which he says: "You will be sorry, I know, and will sympathize with us, I am sure, when I tell you that our sweet little Winnie has gone home." Who was Winnie? She was a sweet little thing of ten. She attended our mission, and as intelligently as you could she gave herself to Christ. A beautiful child, she came with her mother to call on us, and when she left me she put her face up and kissed me, and she said, "Oh, sir, you have helped me, you have helped me." And if I went to South Africa to do nothing else but help that little girl, it was worth the journey. Just a few days passed, and she sickened with smallpox, and all that skill and money and physician could do was done to save her, but it was no use.

When her mother and father were weeping she said, "Don't weep; I am going to Jesus." And then as they watched her she heard the angels calling, and she said, "I am here; don't you know me? I am Winnie, I am one of Gipsy Smith's little converts, and I am quite ready, I am quite ready, and I am coming." And she went to be with Him forever.

He is the children's Saviour. He is the woman's Saviour. He is the man's Saviour. The Saviour for us all. Let us seek Him.

V

THE MASTER'S TOUCH

"And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue [strength, life], had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the crowd and said, Who touched My clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?"—*Mark 5: 30, 31*

V

THE MASTER'S TOUCH

In my last address I tried to speak to you from the three cases given in the fifth chapter of Mark's Gospel, and I tried to show you that in this chapter of incurables Jesus proved Himself Lord over devils, disease, and death. And then we turned the jewel round and caught another flash of its beauty, and we saw that Jesus is the man's Christ, the woman's Christ, and the child's Christ. Now I want to speak about the middle case, this woman who had suffered many things of many physicians and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. So Mark says. When Luke tells the story he leaves that bit about the doctors out, but then he was a doctor himself. Mark has no scruple; and he says practically that all her attempts at healing, though they were many, and though they were the best she could procure, though she consulted the best skill, the wisest of the physicians, all her attempts only aggravated, tantalized, excited hopes

that only ended in despair, and she was worse when they finished their attempts than before they started.

And that woman but represents multitudes. Perhaps you are longing for spiritual healing, for soul satisfaction, you are groping for light. You are trying to climb up out of the slough of your despond; you desire to get your chains broken and your fetters snapped. You say you want the assurance of sins forgiven, to be in possession of peace with God. You believe there is something for you that Christians talk about, and that the Bible describes in the death and resurrection of the Son of God, somehow in a vague fashion believing it is for you, but never getting it, hunting after but never finding, hungry for and yet never satisfied, always thirsty and never getting a drink of the living stream. Oh, how many quacks some of you have consulted, how many earthly nostrums you have been prepared to take, how many spiritual physicians you have listened to! And some of you spend your time in hunting up religious quacks.

There has not been a preacher in town for twenty years that you have not heard. You boast that there has not been a mission held any-

where within reach but what you have been there. You are front-seaters, bench-warmers, religious tramps. Don't smile—I want you to see yourselves. You have been prepared to listen to anybody, any fad, any big person, any sensational story, any man-made message, any new thing. But you do not get healing that way. You have not got healing that way; and if I could see you through God's microscope, the microscope of Calvary, I should see you worse to-day than you were ten years ago, with all your attempts at redemption. With all your attempts to become holy and righteous you are worse to-day than ever you were. And you have come to hear this preacher. But at the beginning let me be plain with you. I cannot save you. That is beyond me. But I know One who can, and there is none like Him. He is the only Physician, He is the greatest Physician, He is the most wonderful Physician, He is the cure-all when He has charge of the case. He is never baffled, He can diagnose every case. He goes to the root of the mischief. There is no mistake with Him. He never makes a blunder. He never apologizes. He never asks to be excused if you are conscious of sin and long for

healing. Give Him the right of way with your case, and He will make a cure, complete, eternal. But He must have His way, then He heals. And all the poor, broken-down attempts at social, religious, and spiritual reform that you have seen, and all the backsliding, and the falls, and the blunders that you have seen around you, have all come about because Christ has not had His way. Give Christ His way, and He will heal completely.

No, my friends, your cure is the woman's. That may sound an old-fashioned thing to say, but there is more truth in it than you have realized yet. Listen. The woman's cure is your cure. Her cure came on the heels of everybody else's failure. Christ's cure always comes there. When people get to the end of things, then Jesus Christ bares His arm and shows His omnipotence, and declares Himself the mighty Saviour. He is a wonderful Jesus. Oh, it is not a quack you want, it is a specialist. It is not the preacher you want, it is not the missioner, it is not the lovely influences of a mission, it is not the beautiful hymns we sing, it is not seeing some great talker, some orator, some great brilliant speaker, it is not being

familiar with books or schools; it is Jesus—Jesus. It is not the Bible, for "the letter killeth." You may be familiar with it, you may have gone through it I do not know how many times, but till it goes through you you will not be any better. It is not in tramping to and from church. It is not in performance, it is not in ritual. Healing is in the presence of Jesus.

Soon after my father's conversion our tents were just outside Cambridge. My father could not read the Bible in those days, he was only a rough gipsy man, but he was saved, and he did the next best with his motherless children before he went to bed, he used to sing and pray every night. And, you know, when he and five children started to sing you could hear us a few fields away, and those dark, winter nights—I can see my father now—he would say, "Before we go to bed, my dears, we will have a hymn or two," and he would strike off. We had no idea that the people in the cottages across the fields heard the songs and came a little nearer to catch the words, or that they stopped while he prayed. It was a strange thing to hear a gipsy man pray in his tent. These people never expected it.

And one woman, we heard afterwards, was smitten in her conscience about her sin, and she said, "Here is a rough gipsy man praying, and he is not praying for me to hear him, for he does not know I am here; he is not praying for other people to hear, for he does not know that anybody can hear him. Here is a gipsy man praying. How is it? I was brought up in a Sunday-school, my mother was a good woman, I came from a Christian home, and I am a mother and never pray for my children." The arrow of conviction pierced her soul, and she went home with it sticking there, and it did not come out easily. For some time she said nothing about it, she kept quiet, but she suffered something of the agony that David must have felt when he said, "While I kept silence my bones waxed old . . . for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." And I tell you when the light of God's holiness shines into a guilty soul it blisters it. One night her husband came home from work, and he saw there was something the matter, he had noticed it for some days, and he said, "Mary, what is the trouble?" She did not answer. "Mary, are you ill?" and

still she kept quiet. "Very well, I knew it was so, I have seen a change in you for some days," he said; "I will fetch the doctor," and away he went. As soon as he had got outside the door she sent her boy to the old tent, and when he got to the tent he said to my father, "Sir, my mother heard you pray some weeks ago and she has never been happy since, and she wants to know if you will come and pray with her." And father said, "Of course I will," and away he went, and when he got there he found the poor woman crying for mercy. It was not long before the plan of salvation had been pointed out to her and she was rejoicing in Christ. She had met the condition, and her burden had rolled away. Her tears had become telescopes through which she could see Jesus. Presently the doctor came with the husband. She looked up at the doctor and she said, "Doctor, I have found Him, I have found Him!" He said, "My good woman, whom have you found?" "Oh, sir," she said, "my poor soul has been hungry for Jesus, and I have found Him." "Well," said the doctor, "you don't need me, for you have the best Physician the world ever saw."

And that is what I want to say to you: it is

not this poor thing you want, it is Jesus. It is not these ministers. We are only fingers pointing, we are only voices crying; but, blessed be God, we do point and we do cry and we tell you in one concentrated, consecrated voice at this moment —

> "Only Jesus
> Can do helpless sinners good."

Only Jesus; and all the efforts of your own will only end in misery. You may hear preachers, you may say prayers, you may go to church, you may take communion, you may listen to quacks, you may hunt up religious nostrums, you may read books, you may long for healing and desire peace, and wonder when it is coming to you. It will never come till you come to Christ. Five minutes' honest, definite, intelligent dealing with Jesus Christ will cure your mischief, and nothing else will. That is the first thing I want to say.

The second is this, that there is a tremendous difference between thronging Jesus and touching Jesus. There were six hundred thousand people left Egypt for the promised land who never reached it. Two men out of the crowd reached it. They were touchers, the others were throng-

ers; the others bleached their bones in the wilderness. There were many people at the Pool of Bethesda, but it was the one that stepped in first after the troubling of the water that was made whole; the others were throngers. Here is a multitude of people at this very moment crowding Jesus, speculating about Jesus, excited about Him, criticising Him, elbowing Him, but one woman touched Him, and that made all the difference.

Which are you? Have you touched Him, or are you a thronger? Some of you throng Him on Sundays, you throng Him in the Sunday-school or church. And you throng Him at missions, and you have been doing it, some of you, till your hairs are gray. In the name of God I tell you—and I tell you to startle you, I tell you to awaken you—in God's name I tell you, church-goer, you are a thronger; you have never touched Him yet, multitudes of you. If you had, your life would be different, for whatever Jesus touches is glorified.

Which are you now? You know deep in your heart. Don't make any excuse, don't shuffle; don't, I beseech you, get away from the main issue. Have you come into living,

vital, saving contact with the Son of God? Because you will know if you have. I don't believe that doctrine which says you can be a Christian without knowing it. I believe that is a sop from hell to soothe your conscience into saying "Peace" where there is no peace. You cannot be awake without knowing it; you cannot eat your dinner without knowing it; you cannot go to church without knowing it; and you must not tell me that a man can be born again and made a new creature, have his chains broken, his night turned into day and his blindness to sight, his hell into heaven, and not know it. Listen. This woman knew, so will you when you have touched Him. This is one of the surest things in God's world, for a man that can look up into the face of Jesus, and say by faith, "Thou art my Saviour," has got in his soul the joy that will some day make heaven pulsate with hallelujahs; the man that could look up into the face of Jesus and say, "Thou art my light and my song, my sins are put away, my chains are broken, my Lord and my God," is sitting in the twilight of the coming glory. If he is not in heaven, he is in the ante-room, and he is as safe as though he had been there a thousand years. For when

God gets hold of a man He does not let go His grip. The Lord God Almighty take hold of you!

Have you touched Him? Do you know this? I am not asking what else you know—are you sure about this thing? Blessed assurance! Religious certainty is the certainty of religion. It is the ground, the bed-rock, the indestructible rock beneath a man's feet upon which he can stand and say to the world, "Rage on, toss on, howl on, ye storms, and peal, ye thunders, and flash, ye lightnings, and break up, O ribs of nature, but it will be but the rocking of an infant's cradle as it lulls me to rest in the arms of Him who saves me, and keeps me by His grace." Have you got it? "Blessed assurance, Jesus *is* mine!" Do you know it? Are you sure of it? Because that is what He calls you to.

You say, "Are you not forcing something that is not in the story?" No, it is all here. The woman came in the crowd behind, and I can hear her as she comes limping, stooping, catching her breath, hardly voice enough to speak out loud, saying in a whisper, but saying it, "If I can only touch the hem of His garment I shall be healed"; as much as to say, "There is power enough in the threads of His coat to save

an old woman." That is the faith that conquered Deity. "Only let me get to Him, and I shall be a new woman." Listen. She knew she was not healed, yet she says, "I shall be," and she touched, and what followed? She was made whole. The next verse says, "And Jesus, knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned in the crowd." What does that teach? This, my brother, this old-fashioned, despised doctrine, but it is going to have a resurrection in all the churches in England, this—His Spirit answers to my spirit, and tells me I am born of God. That is the doctrine. It is no new story. Jesus knew, and the woman knew; and Jesus will know and you will know, when you plough your way through the crowd—whatever the crowd may be for you—and insist on touching Him.

Have you touched Him? I know you are a member of the Church, but have you touched Jesus? I know you are a professor, but are you a possessor? Can you say—

"Life immortal, heaven descending,
Lo, my heart the Spirit's shrine,
God and man in oneness blending,
Oh! what fellowship divine!
Full salvation,
Raised in Christ to life divine."

"Amazing grace, 'tis heaven below
To feel the blood applied,
And Jesus, only Jesus, knows,
My Jesus crucified"?

Is that your experience?—for that is what He calls you to, to put your feet on the neck of your foe, and to bound with gladness. Have you touched Him? If not, get a little closer now.

And if you have touched Him, that leads me to the next thing. If you have touched Him you must confess Him. There is no such thing as getting healed and then being ashamed of the doctor. The man who is ashamed of the doctor is not worth healing. But there is no such thing as being a smuggler here; there is no such thing as playing hide-and-seek here. You must confess Him; He will see to that. If you are to get all He wants you to have, He will see you meet the conditions. She began in the crowd behind, she ended up on her knees in front of Him, where all grateful souls end. He said, "Where is she that touched Me?" and He looked round about to see her that had done this thing; and mark, He turned round, and when He turned round she was there. Don't

you see, it was not as difficult as she thought. She thought she would get at His back; He gave her His face, and she knelt at His feet, and they made a ring there on the highway, and that was the inquiry-room, and she told Him all the truth. Nobody hindered her, nobody checked her. She poured out her heart and her tears, and she told Him everything. He listened patiently, and when she had finished, and when she had told all, and He knew she had told the whole, He said, "Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

If you want to have peace as an accompaniment, peace as a friend and companion, peace as the bloom and blossom of things, the music ineffable sounding forth in the life, let Jesus Christ come in and take the throne, and you will get peace.

Men and women, come out of your hiding. Never mind the crowd; Christ is here, and you can touch Him if you will. You can get where there is always room for another in His presence, at His feet. He will make room if nobody else does. He will see that you get a place right in front of Him, if you only make up your mind to struggle.

"But," you say, "what can I do?" What could she do? She would not have been healed, she was not healed, without an effort, and you will never be saved without an effort. She seized her opportunity. Will you? Here was the Christ passing by. She made Him see her. She had only to touch the hem of His garment, but there was more in that touch than you think. The Lord help you to touch Him the same way, and you too will be made whole. Your night will break into lovely dawn, your misery into music, your tears will be kissed into jewels, your heartache into soul rapture, your lifelong agony will end in the joy of the presence of the risen Christ.

Oh, touch Him! Do not throng Him longer. It ends all one way—it spells failure, it spells loss, it spells agony. But touching means life. Oh, how I thank God I have touched Him! I do not know as much as some of you, but I know this, I had not your chance, your opportunities, but I got this one—I let nobody cheat me out of this—and I shall never forget how I knelt as a gipsy boy and said, "O God, I want to love Thee, I want to be saved, I want to be good, and I will be saved, and I will follow

Thee." I do not know how, but I touched Him at that moment, and He accepted, and He touched me.

God help you to touch Him in the same way, and the grace that turned the gipsy-tent into a palace will change your life from the poor miserable thing it has been into a thing of beauty and praise forever.

VI

SLAY UTTERLY

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."—*1 Sam. 15, from ver. 15.*

VI

SLAY UTTERLY

I TAKE those words as a starting-point. What I wish to say is more in the form of an exposition of the whole of the verses which I read just now for the lesson. You who are familiar with this story will remember that for a long time the Amalekites had been a source of trouble and bloodshed to the children of Israel. God's patience had borne long not only with Israel but with their tormentors, and God decreed that these sinners, the Amalekites, should be punished. At this point their sin was very aggravated, the measure of their iniquity was running over, and the word of the Lord came through the prophet to the king that these sinners were to be punished, wiped out, and Saul and his army were to be the instruments of judgment for the punishment of these rebels. For there is a limit to God's mercy. The man who sets out to fight Him will lose. The man who makes up his mind to defy God to the utmost will find he swears by a cause that will end in failure.

Saul marshalled his army of 210,000 men to slay a nation. The battle is over. We have not time to speak of that. Again the word of the Lord came to the prophet, and this time it is changed. You listen to it, put your ear close to it, and you will hear pathos indescribable. You will hear the falling of tears; you will see a shower of blood. Through these words there seems to rumble the woe of a broken heart. Listen. "Saul is turned back from following Me. He hath not performed My commandments. He has turned his back on Me, the man I honoured, the man I lifted up, the man I exalted, the man I crowned with possibilities stupendous, the man I chose from out from among his brethren, the man in whom I invested so much, and from whom I expected so much, the man who might have done so much as My representative. Saul—he is turned back from following Me. He hath not performed My commandments." I tell you these words seem to glisten with the tears of a disappointed God. "He has turned back." If God were going to write a little bit about you and me, I wonder what He would say. He did speak out about this man. If He were to speak out about the preacher, I

wonder what He would say. If God were to write on my forehead, not what you think I am, not what I seem to be, but as I am with Him, I wonder how many of you would listen to me; and yet my Lord knows me. I wonder if God were to speak out about these preachers what He would say—these singers, these office-bearers, these Sunday-school teachers. You who take communion and parade your religion, I wonder what God would say if He were to write in black capitals what we are across our face; I wonder how many of us would stop for our neighbours to see. God knows every man at his worst. You may deceive the preacher, you may deceive the missioner, and the preacher and the missioner may deceive you. God sees, God knows, and God judges, not according to our poor ideals, not according to our own limited notions and preconceived ideas of what goodness, holiness, salvation, being saved, Christianity, mean, but according to His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus from the foundation of the world. Would He say that you have turned back? For He sees the heart. There is such a thing as heart-backsliding, when nobody save God knows. You can backslide without the preacher knowing it; you can back-

slide without your employer finding it out; you can backslide in a distant city, and it is astonishing what some people think they can do with impunity when they get out of the immediate community in which they are known. When they go for a holiday then they throw off restraint. "Nobody knows me, and I can do as I like." Can you? Not while God sits on His throne, without being haled up before the great white throne some day to give an account of every thought as well as every deed. God knows. He sees the public backslider and He sees the secret backslider, and He knows every inch that is turned back. He knows it; it is noted down on high. Don't think that God is so busy managing worlds, and throwing out planets, fixing stars, and controlling the universe, that He has not time to think of you. God sees everything you do. All else was made for you. He knows you; the climax of His power, the ideal life He wants you to live—He knows when He is deserted, and when you fall short of it, and when you forget Him, and when you are a rebel. God knows.

Saul turned back. Poor Samuel could not sleep that night. He cried unto the Lord all

that night, and many a minister has had the same experience. Do you know what turns the preacher's hair gray? It is not work, it is worry. Work is pleasure, when a man has no care and burden, no pain and anxiety. Do you know what kills the preacher? Do you know what digs the grave for the preacher? Do you know what makes the preacher look an old man long before he ought? I will tell you—the inconsistency of his flock, the backsliding of office-bearer and communicant, the worldliness, the want of godliness—that kills the preacher.

He cried unto the Lord all night. Poor preacher! God pity the preacher who has to minister to a Church that is more worldlike than Christlike! God pity the preacher whose flock runs after the world sooner than the prayer-meeting! God pity the preacher that has to minister to a Church that lives for the superficial, the social, and out of touch with God! That will kill the preacher. He cried unto the Lord all night, and when the morning came (because the secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him) God spoke again, and said to Samuel, "Saul is coming home, and he is coming that way, go and meet him"; and Samuel went to

meet the returning backslider, and when Saul saw him coming he did what all shams do, he put on his religious face. He put on the face that goes to missions and conventions. We are all more or less guilty, for it is fashionable to put on a sort of religious face, a sanctimonious look and a sanctimonious tone in the voice and attitude. Some of you know all about it. There would have been a Bible on the table if Saul had had one, if he had been at home when the prophet was coming; and you have had a Bible on the table when the preacher has called, as though you had been reading it. You had never been looking at it, but you wanted him to think you had. "Blessed be thou of the Lord," said Saul. Don't you hear the tone? Don't you see he knew the language of Zion? "Blessed be thou of the Lord, I have performed the commandments." "Then—listen—what is that? Where did you get those sheep from? Where did you get those oxen from? If you have performed the commandments, if you have put the sword in up to the hilt, if you have spared nothing that was condemned to die, where did you get those sheep? What meaneth the bleating of the sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the

oxen?" "But," said he, "I did not do that, it was the people." Is that out of date? Don't try to appear better than you are, or the sheep will bleat, the oxen will low. God has a strange way of exposing fraud. He knows how. When you are found out, play the man if there is any manhood left in you; do not blame anybody. I know we begin to blame everything but the real cause of the trouble and of the mischief. If I come to some of you men and ask why you are not a Christian whom would you blame? You know Christ's claim on you. You know He died for you, you know He demands your love and your service, and He wants you to be good and hate sin, He wants you to be delivered from it, for He died that He might make you good. How is it you are not as pure as the sunbeam, as sweet as the dewdrop, as lovely as the sun-kissed heights of the Alps, as enchanting as the air of a spring morning when wafted by an angel's wing? Because God makes all these, and He can make you as beautiful. That is His purpose. Calvary means that, that God wants to make you as beautiful as He has made all nature and even the crown of it. How is it you are not like that? Do you say, "Well, sir, I had a bad start,

and if you had had my bringing up you would have been as bad." "My mother was wrong, my father was wrong," a poor fellow said to me on Huddersfield platform one winter's night waiting for the mail train. I had been preaching in Leeds. I got hold of this poor fellow and I talked to him. He was a commercial traveller, and he said, "It is no good to talk to me, sir; I am a drunkard," and he looked like one and smelt like one. He said, "The drink has got me by the throat, sir; no hope for me. My mother died of drink, my father died of drink; I was born with the devil in me." "Well," I said, "you can be born again, and this time with the devil out of you." Jesus undertakes your case; He is a match for you. He is the friend of sinners, He is the Saviour of sinners. If you were perfect you would not need Him. He comes to those who are bad, and it does not matter how bad you are, Jesus Christ can grapple with your case; and though it may be difficult, He can make you a new creature, for He is a mighty Saviour. Do not blame your parents, do not blame your environment, because if you lived in a palace without a new heart you would make the palace a slum. You do not cure a patient

of smallpox by putting him into clean sheets; and if you put a pig in a parlour I know which will change the quickest. I know men who were converted and changed their residence three times within a year, and each time into a better neighbourhood and into a bigger house. What a man is inside he is outside. He makes his own environment, and sin did not begin in a slum, it began in a garden. Talk about a garden city: surely if any man had a chance from his environment Adam had. Don't blame your environment if you are not a Christian; do not blame your mother, do not blame your father. You may have had a bad start, but you will not be held responsible for the start, you will be held responsible for the finish. You will not be held responsible for what your parents did, but for what you did. Do not blame society, for you are a part of society, and if society is not right you be right and show society what you think it ought to be. Don't blame the Church, because most of you do. You say, "Find me a perfect Church, and I will join it." Well, emigrate, go to some little South Sea island where there are no inhabitants and found a Church, and when you get there it will not be perfect five minutes.

None of us are perfect in the Church, and if you find me a perfect Church in this land I will have to stay out, for I am not perfect by any means, but I am trusting in a perfect Saviour. It is not what I am, but what He is. I am not what I was; I know there is a difference. I am not what I want to be. Don't blame the Church. The Church is the place where men should come who want to learn to be better than they are, and who believe in the power of Almighty God to make them new creatures. Don't blame the minister. Don't blame us, for we are only human, and if you think we have not got religion you get it and show us what it ought to be, and if you can show us anything better than we have we will sit at your feet. Don't blame the devil, for the devil can only tempt, he cannot make you sin. No man sins till he consents. He can tempt but he cannot make. Listen. You are a man, and all these years of your manhood you have managed to resist God the Father, God in His holiness, God on His throne, God with all His power, with all His wisdom, with all His burning, scorching purity. You have managed to resist Him, you have managed to resist the Son of His love, the sacrifice of His

heart, the atonement of the Cross, the redeeming blood and pardoning blood. You have resisted that. You have resisted the Holy Ghost, the Regenerator of the heart. You have resisted the Trinity successfully, and when you want to, you will resist the devil by the same personal will-power. You can when you want to. Pray for the desire so that you will look yourself to-night square in the face, pull yourself up, pull yourself round, face yourself, compel attention, demand thought. Whatever else you do, look yourself in the face, if you are not Christlike, and good, and holy, and say at this moment, if you are wicked, unclean, lying, crooked, bad-tempered, if that is your condition it is because you love to be so, and you are content with it. It is your own fault and not your neighbour's, and not your master's, and not your servant's, and not the people about you, and not the Church, and not your father, and not God, and not His Son, and not the Spirit. It is because you have got a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. That is the plain truth, and may God help you to see it.

Now if you read this history a little closer you will see what God means when He says, "Slay

utterly." All the trouble, all the rejection, all the loss to Saul and the kingdom for time and for eternity, all lay in that—he was not willing to slay to the death. No, he must spare the best of the sheep and the best of the oxen. No harm in a few sheep, no harm in a few prize cattle—they are all right; but God said, "Slay, slay utterly."

And is not the same spirit eating the life out of us, killing our power, and spoiling us all along the line for life and service because we are not willing to obey? What did that request mean? "I know I ought to be saved," said the writer of one of the requests for prayer sent to me in a recent mission, "but I am not willing to make the sacrifice." Then there will be no salvation till you do. You must slay to the death. If it is gambling—and it is with some of you—slay it. Would to God I had my way with drink and gambling, I would set fire to both. For the sake of generations unborn I would destroy it forever. There are some of you mothers who would not give up your drink to save your children from becoming drunkards and your daughters harlots. There are some of you fathers who would not stop your gambling to

prevent your boys from becoming assassins, but you will be held responsible at the judgment day for children who are born of half-damned parents. They are scathing words, I know, but they are true. You may think it is awful to utter them, it is more awful to demand that they should be stated. It is more awful to be the sinner. Your drinking and your gambling must go, your pride, your selfishness, your meanness, your bad temper, your un-Christlikeness must go. Slay to the death your love of pleasure, your love of show, your love of appearing more than you are. God wants you to be as sweet and as lovely and as transparent as the breath of heaven's own morning. That is God's purpose. Slay to the death.

And if some of you are to do that you must disgorge what you have in your pocket, for some of you are living on that which belongs to other people. Some of you are in offices you have no right to hold. Some of you are living a double life, and slaying to the death means uncovering, confession, coming out and being true at whatever cost, and slaying to the death. Do you mean to face it? It is not singing hymns and going to church and saying a few prayers and then living

as you like. That is blasphemy, that is mockery. Obedience—a tremendous word—obedience is better than sacrifice. There is something better than communion. There is something better than going to church, there is something better than walking down the aisle on Sunday morning very circumspectly and giving the impression that you are a saint. There is such a thing as doing right—that is religion. It is not in silk hats and frock coats and beautiful dresses, it is not going to church parade and making the thing a show; that is humbug and cant in the eyes of people who make no profession at all. It is being Christlike that tells for time and eternity.

Obedience is a divine command. Some of you will have to decide to-night. You will decide between the oxen, the sheep, Agag the Amalekite, the world, the flesh, the devil on the one hand, and Jesus and suffering, the cross and heaven on the other. Which shall it be? You have to decide. This man, Saul, decided for the oxen and the sheep. He lost a crown, he lost a kingdom, and he lost God. The kingdom and the crown would not have been much, but to lose God, that is hell. If you have God you

can afford to lose a good deal, but to lose all and God, that is hell enough. May God save you from losing Him! Which will you have?

I was trying to preach on this truth a few years ago, and at the close of the inquiry meeting the wife of one of the ministers came to see me. She said, "There is a young lady there wants to speak to you; she refuses to go away. Nobody seems to be able to help her; she will speak to the preacher." I said, "I will go with you," and we went into the room. I went to the other end of the room and spoke to this poor thing. She said, "Sir, I want to confess an awful sin. I am a mother, and I fathered my child on an innocent man. He was a student in one of the theological colleges studying for the ministry, and I blighted his life as well as branded him. I took him through three courts and won my case, but I have a bit of hell inside. He was dismissed and disgraced, and he is as innocent as you are. What am I to do?"

"Do?" I said; "do right."

She said, "I have no peace."

"And you never will have peace," I said. "In this world you may have pardon on condition, but there is no such thing as peace for you, for

you will never forgive yourself that wrong." I could not spare her. I had to be faithful in order to save her. I said —

"You must take off that brand as publicly as you put it on—just as publicly."

"Oh, sir!" she said, "he will send me to prison."

I said, "If it means prison, and you go to prison, you will go with the consciousness that you made an honest attempt to undo the wrong, but for you the way to heaven is *viâ* that confession, and there is no such thing as joy or peace in God for you without taking up your cross."

I shall never forget the effect my words made on that poor thing. She bent, she collapsed, and my heart ached for her. Yet I dare not heal the hurt of that poor thing slightly, nor cry "Peace" falsely. I had to be faithful, and as I knelt beside her I said —

"When you are willing as far as lies in your power to undo the wrong, God will help you, and He will not forsake you."

Presently she bit her lip till it bled, and, clasping the chair in front of her, she said, "O God, I will do it if it means prison."

It was not an easy path for that poor thing,

but she walked it bravely. She went back to the court—and I am speaking of what was in all the London papers—she went back to the court, and had the court revise the whole case, and in that crowded court she said, when they asked her why she made this confession, "Because I gave my heart to God, and I had to take this course to clear my conscience of its guilt."

Her confession relieved her own heart of its burden, cleared an innocent man, and made an impression on that city which is felt to-day. The only path of peace is the path of righteousness.

Slay utterly, put away the evil thing, obey God. Put Him in His right place, and the joy and peace will come.

Will you do it now? You will *obey His Word* or *reject it.*

Which will you do? Saul rejected and lost a kingdom. If you are not careful you may lose your soul.

VII

HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."—*Matt. 19 : 22.*

VII

HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL

When the young man heard that saying! Do you know what that saying was? Jesus had just said to him that he must sell all, give all, leave all, and follow Him all the way; that he must make a complete surrender of himself and all he possessed to Christ and for the purposes of His kingdom. As he heard that saying he went away, for he had great possessions, and they were great hindrances. He was a rich man, and it is not easy for a rich man to be an out-and-out Christian. A rich man may be a Christian, and some are splendid Christians; but in my judgment it takes far more grace to keep a rich man than it does to keep a poor man. I know many good men who are also rich men, and their riches are consecrated to the service of God and men. But riches make it easy for men to go wrong and to do wrong. That is why the Book says, "Set not thy heart upon them." "You cannot serve two masters." "You cannot serve God and mammon."

I want especially to speak to you about three words in the centre of this verse: "He went away." He, the rich young ruler, the aristocratic, cultured, refined, moral, popular, attractive young ruler, with a beautiful character and many magnificent points about him—he went away.

I would like you first of all to remember that he came to Jesus. It is something to come. Nobody can see Jesus as the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Nobody will desire to come to Christ but by the Holy Ghost. No one takes an intelligent step towards Jesus but as the direct result of the prompting of the Spirit of God. No man can come to Jesus Christ except the Father draw him. Some do not come when they are drawn. I do not think we sufficiently emphasize this side of the Gospel truth—that every upward look, every holy desire, every thought of goodness, every aspiration for a nobler life, does not come from the heart within, for that is a sink of iniquity. It is the work of the blessed Spirit which God has given to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

The fact that you are here is a proof that God is calling you, that He is trying to win you, is

coaxing you, arousing you, startling you, making you anxious about these things, and leading you to desire them.

What do we sing sometimes. "Every virtue we possess, and every victory won." What is the next line? "And every thought of holiness, are His, and His alone." Have you found in your heart a desire for Jesus Christ? You must nurse it and coax it. It is God's blessed Spirit given to lead you from dark darkness to light. Do not resist it, but yield to its pathos and power, and it will lead you through the dungeon to the palace, from the prison to the freedom of the gospel; from misery to the joy of His salvation, from the thraldom of the devil into the glorious liberty of God's dear children. It will lead you all the way. And when you begin do not stop, go on. Do not listen when some try to stop you. Do not halt by the way. Turn not to the left hand nor the right. I know there are those who will be foolish enough, wicked and diabolical enough to oppose you and to slander you. Move steadily on with your eyes upon the Cross. Let it not be said of any of you that he came so far and then went away again. Now this man came to Jesus. It is something to come. Some

of you have never done even that. You have never moved an intelligent step towards Jesus Christ. You have taken a good many steps the other way. You have gone so far that when you turn and look back at the distance between you and goodness, and God, and heaven, you are alarmed. If you dare stop and look back you are alarmed at the picture that presents itself; you are startled at the distance you have travelled down the wrong road. Stop a moment and listen. Have you ever taken an honest step towards the light? Have you ever taken an intelligent step towards Jesus Christ? Have you ever moved honestly towards a better life? This man did. He came to Christ. But he not only came, he came *running*. It looks as if he was an earnest, enthusiastic seeker after truth. Remember who he was—an aristocratic, rich young ruler, a popular, educated man, whom everybody in the city knew; and yet, in broad daylight, that man was seen running to Jesus. Walking was not fast enough. He came, says one of the writers, running to Jesus. And I tell you that when we are in earnest after God and heaven and eternal life, and when our eyes are open to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, like Bunyan's

pilgrim, we shall put our fingers in our ears and flee from the city of destruction towards the land of light, and love, and liberty. We shall run crying, "Life!" The Lord help us to be in earnest! The young man ran; he seemed to be in earnest.

Watch him! When he gets to Jesus he kneels, so that it looks as though he were humble. It is a good thing to kneel. It is not a weak thing nor a mean thing to kneel. It may be childlike, but it is not childish. It takes a man to do it when there are other folk looking on. It is not a foolish nor a sanctimonious thing to kneel. There are some who think it is, and they do not, will not, kneel in consequence. They never pray. You prayed once when you were at your mother's knee. But there are some of you who have never prayed since you said, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild"; "Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me." Some of you have never prayed since you felt your mother's hand upon your head, except to ask God to blind you, to damn you, to paralyze you, to strike you dead. Some of you can do that. You contaminate God's pure air with your oaths and curses. You might have been to hell for your education, and

had the devil for your schoolmaster. You have mastered the language of the pit so perfectly. May God help you to quit your swearing! It is a mercy God has not heard those awful prayers.

I say again that it is not a childish thing to pray. It is a beautiful thing to pray; a manly, an ennobling thing. It is an act that Jesus is pleased to see. When a man turns from his sin, his rebellion, his uncleanness, his drunkenness, his lying, his pride, his wicked abominations, and his lust, and gets upon his knees to pray, the Son of God looks over the battlements of the skies, and says, "Behold, he prays." Do not think it is a childish thing to pray. It is the way to heaven. This man prayed.

If you look at him a little closer, you will see he seems not only in earnest and humble, but as if he is honest he opens his heart to Jesus. He seems to say, "Just tell me what to do. I want eternal life. I know I have not got it. I feel a hunger that has never been satisfied, that I have never been able to appease. There are thoughts in me which I do not understand. There are depths in my being I have never been able to fathom, heights I have never been able to scale, immensities I cannot measure. I somehow feel

I want life, eternal life. What shall I do to get it? O man of sorrows, Jesus of Nazareth, good Master, tell me what I am to do." And Jesus led him step by step. He tried him by the law; and the young man said, "All these have I kept from my youth up; but I do not feel satisfied. Something is missing. What lack I yet?" And Jesus said, "Hear, then! *Sell that—t-h-a-t—thou hast and give to the poor,* and come and follow Me; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

Look, listener. He ran to Jesus and seemed enthusiastic; he knelt to Jesus and seemed humble. With honest frankness he confessed his heart's need to Christ; and if he take but one step more, he will be saved. If he make a surrender of himself and his possessions, the angels will sing for joy, and the Church of God will be the richer for all time. If he be honest, brave, courageous, and whole-hearted, and just step over the line, what joy for time and eternity he will create. But listen, immortal spirit. See yourself, will you? He came there, but he went away. Do you not see how much you can do, and yet do nothing? Do you not see how far you can climb, only to fall into the infinity of horrors; how much you can seem to

know and yet be a fool; how moral and attractive and beautiful it is possible to be in the eyes of the world, and yet be bad enough to turn your back on Christ, and go your own way? Is not that a full-length portrait of yourself? You may be in this house to-night. You may have come to talk with Jesus. These wonderful privileges may be yours, and yet you may go away.

Is it possible for a man to talk with Jesus, to look into the face of Jesus, to handle Jesus, and yet to go away? Yes, this young man did it, and went away. You can do more than that. You can live with Jesus and not know Him. Judas did for three years, and then sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Some of you have sold Him for less than that. Judas had a field out of the bargain. You have got nothing. Listen. You can do more than live with Him. You can die in His presence, and never know Him. The thief did, and cursed Him in his dying moments. You can have a great many privileges and yet go away. What are you doing, my brother? Is that your history? If this young man had only stepped across the line, if he had only declared himself, how differently the story would have read. If he had looked upon the sacrifice

which Jesus commanded him to make, and then looked on Jesus and on heaven, and thought of all it meant; of the height, the length, the depth, the breadth, the eternity, the joy, the honour, the usefulness for time and eternity that comes to a man who is associated with, and living in and for Emmanuel; if he had taken just that one step, he might have written an epistle, he might have been an evangelist of the early Church. If he had come into the kingdom with all his influence and all his magnificent character and capabilities, he would have swept hundreds and thousands into the kingdom of God. All that was lost because he did not come. And when you stand at the bar of God you will be held responsible not only for what you have done, but for what you might have done if you had been on the right side. God has made certain investments in you, and He expects some return now and by and by; and woe be to the man or woman who meets with a disappointed Christ. You know what happened to that fig-tree. He cursed it. He did not die for it. He died for you. He was disappointed, and He cursed the tree at night, and in the morning it was dead.

I want you to think. "He went away."

Where did he go to? Back to his riches; but his riches did not satisfy him, and they never would. Riches are convenient. They may gratify you to a large extent. They may give you opportunities for pleasures and preferments. They may help you to widen your outlook for a little, or may blind your outlook. Riches are convenient, but they do not feed the man within. A soul cannot be fed on bricks and mortar. The man who rides in carriages and drives the fastest horses, who drinks the most sparkling wines, and sits in the fastest company does not revel in these things long. He turns away from them, wearied and tired, and sick at heart. A lady said to me a little while ago, "I can have all I want, as far as money is concerned," and a big tear rolled down her cheek; "I can have my delights, my fine clothes, my carriage, and my box at the opera or the theatre. I can have my fashions and my fashionable society," and she shook like a tired bird; "but I am weary of it all. I want Jesus. These things do not satisfy me." If gold could feed a soul, then happy would that man have been who went down in that seething whirlpool and left two millions of money behind him.

There was not a ripple to mark the place where he sank. His millions made him a suicide.

A millionaire died a little while ago and left twenty millions. His own family said he was the most miserable wretch they ever knew. You cannot satisfy the man within with riches. You are not built that way. You are built with different material, the material out of which God builds the planets, out of which God builds the eternities. When worlds go out like sparks from a blacksmith's anvil, when those planets are split-wheels on the highroads of the eternities, you will still exist. Why do you not try and feed your soul on things eternal? Why feed on air, and "spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which satisfieth not"? "Eat ye that which is good, and may your soul delight itself in fatness." His riches could not help him. When he left Jesus, he left the riches of the skies. He left the treasures that never fade away. His riches could not help him, and they cannot help you.

Where did he go? Did he go to his friends? Who could take the place of Jesus? He had left Him. His friends were as badly off as he. He had not found in his friends what he had

wanted, or he would not have come to Jesus. The true friends of this world are few and far between. False friends bless you while the sun shines; they applaud you whilst your pockets are full, you cheek red, your eye clear, and your brain brilliant; but let sorrow come, let the cyclone of misery strike you, the avalanche of failure fall upon you, and then where are your friends? They do not know you. The friendships of the world are poor. Do not think you will find a substitute in humanity for Jesus Christ. He is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Where did he go? Back to his pleasures? They faded, and passed away with the evening. They were gone with the morning cloud. They perished in the using, faded like the flowers, and went out with the light. There is a certain amount of gratification in worldly pleasure, I know, but it does not last. Wait till the bloom has gone from your cheek; it can never be put back. You may try, but we know when it is not real. When the eye grows dim, you can never light that fire again. Wait till the brain refuses to think, till the hand trembles, and the step is infirm. What then? Where are the pleasures

then? You may call them up, but they will refuse to come; you may thunder, but they will be deaf; you may ask the pleasures of the world to fulfill their part of the contract, the bargain they promised to give you; but they are bankrupt, they are sold up and empty.

The pleasures He gives are forevermore. "His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace."

Where did he go? Did he go to heaven? Come now, you are an intelligent man; I appeal to your judgment and your conscience. Did he go to heaven? Remember Jesus Christ was there. This young man came to Jesus, but he went away when he was told what to do to get into the kingdom. Did he go to heaven? No, he left that when he left Jesus. If you could climb the steps of gold, get through the gates of pearl, and search for him, you would search in vain. If you looked across the landscape of eternal beauty you would not find him; if you looked at the processions of triumph you would not find him there; if you looked through the many mansions you would not find him; if you looked for him among the multitude which John saw, which no man can number, that "have

washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," you would not find him there. He is not known to the Lion of the tribe of Judah. And if you went and said to Jesus, "Master, where is that young ruler? The last time I saw him was in that evangelistic service, and he seemed concerned. He ran, he was moved, he prayed, he wept, he asked then what he was to do to be saved, he seemed very promising. Where is he?" I think Jesus would say, "Do you not know that he went away? He might have been here, but he left this when he left Me. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me." There is no other way given under heaven whereby we can be saved. The man who refuses to take that course, morning, noon, and night, goes out into the darkness, the deep, dark night, the starless, hopeless, eternal night.

"He went away." Jesus comes to you now, my brother, to you, my sister, with a voice full of pathos, full of pleading, full of love for you, full of power to save you.

He knows what you are thinking, what you are feeling. You are concerned about your soul, because His Spirit is striving with you, making

you think of eternal things. In the light of this young man's case, now that you are on the point of turning one way or the other, He says to you, "Will ye also go away?" Can you in the face of that? Dare you go away? *If you dare.* Some day you will hear Him say, "*Then they went away, now they must go into the outer darkness.*" You must settle it with yourself. Nobody can hinder you if you will come; nobody can make you come unless you will. How can I help you to do it? I plead with you for Jesus Christ's sake not to go another step in the wrong direction, not to take another step away from Jesus. If you cannot get to Him because you feel too feeble, if you feel too paralyzed and physically unable to take a step towards Him because of sin, then turn your face to Him. Do not turn your back upon Him, for that means death. Fall upon your knees, looking unto Jesus. Pray now. You say, "I cannot pray." Say this prayer, "Lord, help me," and if you cannot say it all, say "Lord." If you cannot say even that, then LOOK, for "There is life for a look at the Crucified One, There is life at this moment for thee."

With all the power of my being, for Christ's

sake, for the sake of the Cross, for the sake of the bloody sweat, for the sake of the grief and shame, do not go away. Move towards Him, and let it be now, remembering that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

VIII

THE FINAL CHOICE

"And as he reasoned of righteousness and temperance (or, as the Revised Version has it, 'self-control') and judgment to come, Felix trembled (or, was terrified), and answered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season (and please note the little word 'more' which you so often put in when you quote this verse is not in the verse at all: it is often quoted, 'When I have a more convenient season'; the word 'more' is not there)—when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."—*Acts 24: 25.*

VIII

THE FINAL CHOICE

THIS is a wonderful picture. I wish I could paint it. Three people—one God's prophet, God's messenger, the other two a man and a woman who were living a very sinful life. Paul is in prison, awaiting his trial, and these two want some new excitement, something to amuse and something to entertain. Time, though they live in sin, hangs heavily. They are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not, and like the man of whom we read that longed for some new pleasure, and offered a reward to anybody who would invent one, these two want something else to excite, something to pass away the time, and so they send for God's prophet that he may entertain them. Says the verse that precedes this one, "He sent for Paul and heard him concerning faith in Christ." And it needs courage to preach to one man, or to two people. There are those who can preach to the crowd. It takes a man with the vision of the Cross to preach to two people; to see that a little child may be a nation; and when we have the right spirit we shall see in

one person something worth preaching to. If you are sent to preach the truth, you must be unsparing and faithful, you must declare the whole counsel of God. It takes courage to preach to the man who sits in a high position, when he is close to you, when he is in his own house and you are sitting at his table, or in his own room face to face.

That was the picture. There sat Drusilla, there sat Felix, and here stood Paul, and he may have had the chains on him, the chains that told of suffering for Christ's sake. Paul never had a better chance than then of making a friend of one who could help him when the trial came on. His enemies were outside, his accusers were away. Those who were thirsting for his blood were not in this little, quiet meeting amongst the three. If he will only flatter, if he will only congratulate instead of expostulate, if he will fawn upon Felix and toady to him, if he will compromise he may capture this man at any rate, and he will have a friend at court when the day of trial comes.

But, listen, Paul was not made of that material. He could suffer, he could die, but he could not sin, he could not trim. His message was burning in his very soul, his message had come down to him as "Thus saith the Lord." And he seemed

to take in the whole situation, and to realize that this was his only chance of dealing personally, pointedly, piercingly with this sinner in front of him and the other sinner beside him. And so he reasoned—of the Cross? Not to begin with. Of the shed blood? Not to begin with. Did he preach from this text, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son"? Not to begin with. Did he say, "He that believeth on the Son shall be saved"? No. He reasoned of righteousness, he talked about God's holiness. He talked about God's love for righteousness and holiness, and how it was His purpose to lift men into that atmosphere. And he would talk about God's hatred for sin, and he made sin appear sin. He did not excuse sin; he meant Felix to see and feel the awfulness of his own sin. He reasoned of rightness, wholeness, Godlikeness, purity. He brought him up to face the blazing light and the scorching presence of God's purity. He talked of righteousness. I do not think that that side of the truth in these days is enforced as it ought to be. We have preached the love of God till some are lovesick. You know God's love; what you need to be told, and what I mean to tell you before I get through, is that God hates sin as

much to-day as when Christ hung on the nails to put it away, and that He does not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.

He reasoned of righteousness to a man who was unrighteous. He talked about self-control —temperance—to the man who was intemperate, and whose passion was running wild. The man within was riot. His whole being was in a state of anarchy, a rebel.

He talked of righteousness, judgment; and as I have tried to enforce before, religion that honours God is right-doing, walking straight, holding a constant witness to the cleansing power of the precious blood. It is not hunting up meetings and preachers and going to conventions, taking your pencils and writing down in little note-books pretty little sayings, beautiful little extracts, pretty thoughts. It is letting them blaze in your life when the convention is over, when the meeting is past, when the Sunday is gone, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, three hundred and sixty-five days in the year all aglow, warm with holiness unto the Lord. Righteousness—"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but rightness—rightness." It is turning from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. It is the wicked

man forsaking his wickedness in conformity to the will of God. Righteousness—not going to church, nor being christened, or confirmed, or baptized, or taking communion. All that will fall into the proper place, but first of all righteousness, rightness, right relationship with heaven, readjustment with God, putting me in my right place with God, and God in His right place in me and in all my concerns. What we want is sin dethroned, self dethroned, Christ honoured and Christ glorified not only among the angels, not only among the saints who march around the steps of the throne, not only among those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, but down here in the city, in your home, in your workshop, in your business—rightness, righteousness in your yard measure, righteousness in your weights and scales, righteousness in your ledger; to handle your ledger with as much religious feeling and fervour as you take your seat in the pew on Sundays and handle the communion cup—this is what the gospel means.

I tell you this is a mighty, sweeping gospel. It is an unsparing gospel where sin is concerned. "He reasoned of righteousness, of temperance,

and of judgment"—judgment, don't forget it, judgment here and judgment yonder. Do not forget that "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world." Do not forget that there is a great white throne, and that we will have to stand before it. Do not forget that we shall stand as we are and not as we seem to be, and that we will have to give an account of the deeds done in the body. And do not forget that it will not be a mock judgment, it will be a righteous judgment, that God will be the judge, and that He will render to every man according as his work shall be. Oh, to have listened to this preacher, to have heard Paul as he waxed fiery, flaming as he talked of righteousness and of judgment! Oh, to have seen the flash in his eye, and the pointed finger and the erect figure as he shook and the chains rattled, while he lifted as high as he could that hand, pointing to the great white throne! Oh, to have seen him as he pealed out the truth upon that man like a mighty thunder-clap into his conscience and into his brain until he shook, until the seat shook on which he sat, until he clutched it and said, "Hold! that will do, Paul. I know it is true, I have heard as much as I can carry, I have got as much as I can bear; that will do. Go back to the dungeon. It

is not convenient. I know it all, I feel it all; I know what I ought to do. My soul, my conscience, my better self, my illuminated judgment, everything—God the Spirit, your word and your presence, and these clanking chains—tells me what I ought to be and what I ought to do, but it is not convenient. When it is convenient I will send for thee." Cannot you hear him marching down that corridor? Cannot you hear the rattle of those chains? and don't you hear the slamming of the door that shuts the old saint up—glorious old Paul—in that dungeon for Christ's sake? Listen. The slamming of that door is but the echo of another door which closed itself forever against these two when Paul was ordered off. When he went their chance went with him. Oh, how different the story might have read! How blessedly it might have ended! How triumphantly it ought to have ended! But the man hugged his sin and would not yield.

Now why did not Felix become a Christian? He might have been an apostle, he might have been an evangelist, he might have written an epistle. It takes a saint to do that. He might have left a message which would have blessed the world, he might have left a decision that would have been an inspiration for all time. But he

went the other way. He decided against Paul and Paul's Christ. And surely if any man in the world ever had a fair chance of salvation Felix had. With the world shut out and with that great soul-winner in front of him, with nobody to interrupt, nobody to come between, nobody but Paul and His Master facing him and the plan of salvation in front of him, and the heavens opening above him, and the light streaming down upon him and God speaking through His saint, surely no man ever had a better chance of life eternal than this man. Surely, my brother, my sister, you cannot look in the face of God one day and say, "I should have been a Christian if I had an opportunity." You cannot say that because you have this blessed hour in which to yield to God. If you never had a chance before you have one now, and if you never had anybody to talk to you about these things you have some one now. You cannot plead at the great white throne that you never had a chance. Felix cannot. Surely no man ever had a better preacher than Paul, the prince of preachers. There was no trimming about Paul. There was no stooping to suit his people. He was not afraid of the man in the chariot and he did not despise the man in the

gutter. Why, Paul, glorious old Paul, he said himself, "I determined to know nothing among you save Christ and Him crucified." There was no mongrel gospel with Paul. There was no water and milk gospel with Paul. It was the pure, unadulterated, unchanging, living message. Surely you cannot say when you get to the white throne, if you have not a wedding garment on, you cannot say, "Well, if I had only heard the pure gospel I should have been saved"? You cannot say that; you have had it from the pulpit, you have had it from the lips of your own ministers, you have heard it till you can go to sleep under it. You are hardened by the process of listening to it. For this mighty gospel, what it does not soften and weld, it hardens. It is the savour of life or of death. You know it, and you are familiar with it. You have had the gospel as faithfully as ever Paul preached it.

Surely this man might have been saved, for he was convicted. He felt more than he wanted to feel. He trembled, but, mark this—he trembled, but the woman did not. That is striking. I have often seen two people sit together under the same sermon, and I have seen one shake and tremble and weep beneath the power of God, and I have seen the other rebellious and hard and

hindering; I have seen one want to come, and I have seen the other pull him back. When a woman does set herself against Christ, she does. I have not been an evangelist for a quarter of a century, without finding out that when a woman does come to Christ, she comes all the way. I believe this man would have been saved, yea, I know he would, but for that woman. Felix trembled; she did not. He felt, he was convicted, he was awake, he knew, he was concerned, he was wrought upon. Haven't you been there? Is not your conscience, my sister, my brother, with me at this moment? Don't you feel your sin; don't you see something of its wickedness; don't you realize something of its damning power; don't you see how it is spoiling you, how it is robbing you of your manhood; don't you see how your life is embittered; don't you see how it is leading you away from God and rightness? Don't you see it? I know you do. That is the Spirit at work within you. Your conscience and your judgment are bearing me witness. Don't you see that you can get as far as trembling conviction, and yet stop and refuse to take the decisive step? Why do you not yield? I want to push that question till I get an answer. Why didn't Felix surrender? If he heard the gospel from the lips

of that faithful man and felt its awful import, if that stupendous opportunity was his in which he might have built a throne, why did he take the dungeon? If the hour was his in which he might have set an anthem ringing around the throne, why did he forge the chain? If the hour was his in which he might have decked the brow of Emmanuel, why, in the name of everything that is good, did he grovel in the dust and allow hell to drive over him its chariots and to grind him to powder? Why? Don't you see the damning effects, the deluding effects, the destroying effects of sin? The reason is given in one word—sin, his own sin. Beside him sat another man's wife with whom he was living. Are you surprised that Paul talked of righteousness? How could he talk of anything else? Could God smile on that? He talked of righteousness. I should think so. And Felix knew if he became a Christian that woman must go home to her husband; at any rate, she must go from him. He knew that, and he looked at her, and in that look he lost his soul. He said, "No, it is not convenient. When it is I will call for thee." But he never did, he never had another chance. Samson lost his strength through a woman. The daughter of Herodias danced Herod into

the pit. Drusilla was the chain that bound this man for time and for eternity. What is binding you? What is fettering you? What is getting you by the heart and life? What has gripped you in its clutch? What is it? You know. You know. Who is it? You know, and God knows. The truth will out some day. The truth will out, for every man has some special sin. It may not be lust for a woman, but it may be lust for gold, it may be lust for drink, it may be appetite in another form, it may be ambition, which is just as damning. What is it? Every woman has her own sin. It may not be lust for a man, but it is lust of some sort, and there are some women who will sell their souls and the souls of their children for dress and trinkets. May God save you. Listen—it is a choice between sin and holiness. It is a tremendous choice, but there can be no two opinions about it, if you look at it wisely and well. It is a choice between the low and the high, the earthly and the heavenly, time and eternity, the perishable and the imperishable, the tinsel and the real gold, the passing moment and the heaven that awaits those who will only obey.

Men and women, sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, rise to the occasion. Don't

mingle for yourselves the bitter drink, don't fly in the face of your eternal interests. Don't fight against God. Don't hug your sin. Don't play the fool—don't. God wants to save you, and He will save you. He would have saved that man if he had come, but he did not, and because he did not God could not. "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." "How often would I have gathered you under My wing . . . and ye would not."

It is not God's fault. If a man goes to hell—whatever hell may mean, I pray you may never find out, but whatever hell is—I do not know—but whatever it is, if a man goes there, it is because he will not accept God's remedy. You cannot charge God with your destruction; you must charge it home to your own will in the choice of evil, in your own wicked, rebellious, God-dishonouring, God-hating, Christ-rejecting life; you must charge yourself. I cannot hear my Lord libelled without protest. Some of you say, "Do you think God is a God of love, to send a man to hell?" God does not send him there; he sends himself. You don't go to hell because you are a sinner, but because you refuse to walk over the bridge that God has built and made it possible for you to go the other way.

You refuse God's grace; you refuse the way of salvation. God wants to save you from your sin, and He will save you now if you will submit. Will you give up your sin? You don't want me to name your sin. If I did know it I would hold it before you till you loathed it; I would make you face it; I would hold it in front of you till you ran away from it; I would make you see your own sin, in spite of yourself, were it in my power, till you yielded and gave yourself wholly to Jesus Christ.

My brother, my sister, let this be a time of real surrender, when you turn from the wicked thing, the thing that God hates in your life, the thing that has made you all you are, the thing that is destroying you day by day. Turn from that, and turn from it now, and you will hear Him say to you as you come, though your coming is faltering, though it is weak, if it is coming, if it is turning from sin, if it is yielding to God your heart, your life, all there is, with no reservation, the whole being, absolute, entire, if it is a real surrender, you will hear Him say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; and if your ears were a little keener, then you would hear the angels singing, "The dead is alive, and the lost is found."

IX

SAVED AND UNSAVED

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."—*Jer. 8 : 20.*

IX

SAVED AND UNSAVED

THE two last words in this verse are those which I wish to speak to you about. I will not ask you to follow me through the textual windings of these words, but simply to think of some of the things they suggest. I want you to listen, you whom these words specially describe, for whatever you or I may think, there are only two classes of people: there are the saved and there are the unsaved. The people who are really Christ's by an intelligent decision, surrender, and living, vital faith; those who have passed from death unto life; those who are described by the words of the apostle, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"; those who are described by that wonderful word, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Those who are born again and have the witness within

that they are accepted in the Beloved; those who can say, with the poet —

"Amazing grace, 'tis heaven below
To feel His blood applied,
And Jesus, only Jesus know,
My Jesus crucified."

Those who can say with Wesley: —

"No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own."

Those who are hidden in Him by faith, and who can say with the apostle, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death: for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law," says the apostle, "in Christ Jesus hath made me free." There are many among those I am addressing who know what that experience is; they have come to Calvary by faith; they have bathed His feet with

their tears, they have wiped them with the hair of their head; they have heard Him saying just as really and truly as He said it to the woman who did it, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; and you came from the Cross singing, "I will love Him because He first loved me." They are those among you—I say it on the authority of the Word of God—who have passed from death unto life, who know Jesus saves them, who have consigned themselves and handed themselves over to be Christ's men and women; they have sealed the contract; they are God's property, and they sing, "Not my own, but saved by Jesus, I am His"; my life is His and must flow along His channels, my words must be spoken as in His presence, and my all must be done as for eternity. There are those who know that they are saved.

"Ye are saved by grace." It is all of free grace, perfect love working on behalf of those who are perfectly worthless. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy. No work of our own would accomplish this; we are not saved by works, but we are saved for works. You cannot be saved by your works, but you cannot be saved long without works. You cannot build a house

without materials, and you cannot live a new life with an old heart; you must know Christ in your own heart before you can claim those mighty words in capitals—SAVED BY GRACE.

My heart saddens as I think of the multitude who are not really saved. And God knows. He sees the innermost heart. "Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts," says the Psalmist. God can turn the light on in the most dingy corner of every heart and life, and though there may be the profession and the cloak of religion and the outward garb, going to church, hymn-singing, Bible-reading, and all these things, yet the heart itself may be like a cage of unclean birds; though the outward platter be clean, there may be rottenness and corruption within. That was the charge our Lord brought against the people who thought themselves saved and who did not want the Light when it came, but rejected it. Some of you are in the same state; indeed, you have got angry with me for telling you the truth. You would rather be left alone; you don't thank me nor anybody else for telling you the truth, and the devil within you cries out, as it did to the Son of God, "Let us alone, torment us not." And that is the sad part of it to

me, that here in the dawn of the twentieth century, with light, with education, with respectability, with church-going, and a sort of sentimental concern for all these things, that you should listen to me, while on your poor scared conscience, on your poor, worthless and wasted life, and even church-going respectable life, there is written, as by the finger of God, those two words on you—on you, my brother, and on you, my sister, though you were at church last Sunday—Not Saved; and the ink in which they are written was distilled by your own iniquity, which makes it all the blacker.

Yet you know it need not have been so; you might have been saved. Some of you come from the best homes; you had the best training possible. Love! yes, the tenderness of a mother's love, and all that that means; a father's love, and all that that means; the sweetest and most beautiful surroundings were yours; you were born, cradled, and nurtured in a home filled with goodness, and in your veins there flows the moral blood, the moral momentum—the result of a godly ancestry; in your veins there flows—in some of you—the blood of saints and martyrs; and yet you are not saved. Think of your

opportunities, of your Sunday-school days, your church days. You have been lifted to the gates of gold with the superior weight of advanced opportunity. You cannot plead ignorance at the bar of God; the very angels would cry out against you, and say, "We flew to that man on errands of mercy"; the sun, the moon, and the stars would cry out; the rocks, the streams, and all nature would join in the chorus, "Away with him, for he knew better." If you had been born in a gipsy tent where there was no Bible I could pity you, but you come from homes where a Bible was in every room, where you were just saturated with a mother's influence. It might have been different; it ought to have been, for you had the light—light enough to save a nation. Think of it; think of it. God help us to think! Think of all that has been lavished on you, of all the hopes that have been centred and focused upon you; think of all that God has done for you, of the trouble He has taken, of the patience with which He has borne with you. Think of the mercy He has showed you, of all the life given to you; and remember He has spared you for one purpose—to save you, and somehow or other you have managed to thwart

and frustrate His designs until to-day. *Not saved*—and salvation cost so much, purchased so dearly. If you want to know how dearly, go a long way back. Sin is old, but the Blood is older: God had a Lamb slain before the foundations of the world; and if you want to know how much it cost God to save you, go back to the beginning, away back over the mighty sea of time; and if that is too far go to Calvary, to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, to Gethsemane. Did you ever think of it? It was no sudden sorrow that overtook Him; it was a long-looked-for and anticipated agony. When He worked on that carpenter's bench and took hold of that piece of timber, He must have thought of the piece that would be a cross upon which He would hang. And when He took up that hammer, don't you suppose He thought of another hammer that would strike Him; and when He handled those nails, don't you think there were other nails in His mind that would pierce His hands and feet? And when He took the knots out of that timber, don't you think they would remind Him of the thorns that would pierce His lovely brow? Ah, He must have thought of it; He knew it all; yet He faced it all, and did not turn to the right

nor to the left. When His loved ones tried to prevent Him going to that bloody tree, He set them back and set His face towards Calvary. Born in another man's stable; buried in another man's grave; His first pillow, straw, and His last, a crown of thorns; His first companions, cattle, and His last, thieves; His first resting-place, somebody else's manger, and His last, somebody else's cross; and it was for me, for you. Have you ever thanked Him? Have you ever gone on your knees and showed your gratefulness? You have cursed Him, taken His name in vain, rejected Him and spurned Him, and spurned His followers and ridiculed or criticised unmercifully, but you have never thanked Jesus. That is the damning sin—ingratitude. Don't forget! My brother, there is nothing that has cost God so much as this, and yet there is nothing which you have treated with such contempt. Don't be afraid of the Cross; I know it is your humiliation, but it is also your salvation. I know it shows up your darkness and your sin, but it is the key which unlocks the gates of gold and invites everybody to come in and share the bounties of God's love. I would rather be Gipsy Smith this side of the Cross than Adam on the

other side. If we sin we have an Advocate with the Father. They used to go to the Cross to die, now they go to live; it used to be the place of death, but now it is the place of life. Flashing out from that Cross with its outstretched arms inviting the world, I hear words—words sweeter than any music the world has ever listened to—crying, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." God help you to come!

Think of it in this light: Not saved, and salvation so important. If your sin was base and black enough, cruel enough to tear Jesus from the Throne and nail Him to the accursed tree—and He was obedient even unto death—what will your sin do with you if you do not get rid of it? It will have no mercy. Unless you are saved according to God's plan, you are lost; there is no other Name, no other Way, no other Salvation, and if you miss this, you miss all; your salvation depends upon that Cross; your emancipation depends on that surrender; your hope for this life and for the life to come hangs on that Cross. Pull that down and you are doomed; the world has absolutely nothing instead to offer you. Turn your back on this, and you are lost forever.

Think of it in this light: Not saved, and your chances of being saved going, passing away. Some of you have less chance now than you ever had in your life, and if you miss this opportunity you may never have another; you can never tell how near Death may not be; and if you let this chance go by, God help you, for it may be your last on earth. My brother, my sister, be saved now; Jesus calls and wants to save you, but even He cannot save you against your will. He has seen your heart moved and made tender, and you have gone away unsaved. He has had to say, "Ye would not come unto Me that ye might have life." If I could save you, I would; if my arms were strong and long enough I would bear you all to Jesus. If one word of mine could do it, I would speak it; if anything I could do would bring the unsaved gathering to my Lord, how gladly would I work a miracle! But it is beyond me, and there are some things Jesus cannot do; and one of them is that He cannot save a soul against its will; and unless some of you make haste He will have to tell you some day that He would have saved you, but you thwarted Him; He longed to do it, but you would not have it; you resisted to the bitter end.

When my father was a young man, a band of our people, the gipsies, fifty or more of them, had been picking a field of hops on a farm near Tunbridge. Some of you may be old enough to remember it, for it is a matter of history, and if you have ever occasion to visit Tunbridge, ask to see the monument they erected to my people. These gipsies had finished one field, and were crossing to another field on the other side of the Medway. They mounted the wagon—men, women, and children—and away the horses started, and with jokes, songs, and laughter made merry music to the other toilers in the fields as they passed. As they turned a bend in the lane they saw the old rotten wooden bridge over which they hoped to pass safely. The water was in flood and flowing over the roadway, and when the women saw it they were frightened, and some of them screamed—for gipsy women are only like other women—and before the drivers could stop the horses, startled by the screams, ran away, crashing into the sides of the old structure, and instantly they were all thrown into the flowing river current. A brave young gipsy seized one of the horses drifting down, and watched for one who was dearer to him than any

one in the world—his mother—and the gipsy boy loves his mother. Presently he saw her, and after many struggles he reached her. But she seized him in such a way that he could not manage to save her, and at last she sank. When the day of the funeral came there were thirty-nine gipsies buried, and people gathered from all the countryside to show their sympathy with these poor people. Forgetting the crowd and the clergyman, the poor lad crept down into the trench which contained the coffins, and, kneeling beside his mother's, he cried: "Mother, mother, I tried to save you; I did all a man could do to save you, but you would not let me." And if some of you don't mind, Gipsy Smith will have to cry at the Bar of God, "I did all a man could do to save you, but you would not let me"; and if you don't mind, Jesus Christ will have to say, "I did all a God could do to save you, but you would not let Me."

"O be saved, His grace is free;
O be saved, He died for thee."

X

GLEANING FOR GOD

"Now Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer."—*Acts 3 : 1.*

X

GLEANING FOR GOD

A TALK TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS

If Peter and John had been absent from that particular prayer-meeting I think they might have been excused, especially if you think for a moment of the wonderful times through which they had just passed. For if ever men in the world had their minds and hearts crowded with food for reflection, with something to take up their mind and occupy their attention, these men had. Peter and John had just witnessed the crucifixion; they had just witnessed the resurrection; they had just witnessed the ascension; they had just witnessed the fulfilling of the promise, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." They now knew, as they never did know, never could have known without that experience, what Jesus meant when He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; and when He is come, He shall abide with you forever." They now knew

something of what Jesus meant when He said, "Tarry at Jerusalem until ye receive the promise of the Father." They now knew something of what He meant when He said, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you." They had waited in that upper room in obedient prayer, believing prayer. They were all there, and they were all of one mind and of one heart, and they waited till the dawn of Pentecost kissed their brow and bathed their hearts and filled their spirits.

When it was noised abroad that this mighty indwelling, this reinforcement, this tide, this indefinable something had taken possession of these men, when it was noised abroad in the city, you know the result. The people flocked in their thousands, and when they looked at these men they could not understand it. They saw something in them that they had never seen before. They felt something about them which they had never felt before. They were changed; marvellously changed. They were bold, such boldness as they had never witnessed. They took knowledge of their boldness, and their speaking moved them and surprised them, for they all heard them speak in their own tongue, wherein they were

born, and yet they were unlearned and ignorant men. And they said, "What meaneth this? This is what it means. They are not themselves; they are not responsible; they are drunk." I wonder if anybody would ever come to your quiet, sedate, orthodox, refined, smooth, poetic, beautiful service and say, "You are drunk." I wonder if anybody would ever come up into your church and look at your minister and look at your professing Christians and say, "They are all drunk together." The fact is, we are too sober. That is what we are trying to avoid. We do not want people to say that; we want them to go away and say, "That is just beautiful." The people will not say it is just beautiful if we are faithful. We want people to go away and say, "Oh, I did enjoy that!" I never heard of anybody enjoying a surgical operation, and that is what every sermon ought to be. It ought to be a piercing to the quick. It ought to be a stirring of the man within. It ought to be the undoing of things and making us feel and realize what we are in the presence of Almighty God.

"They are drunk," that is what they said. Does not that piece up with what they said of the Lord? They said His disciples were drunk;

they said of Him, "You must excuse Him to-day, He is not all there, He is beside Himself," practically, "Jesus is insane," because He forgot to eat bread, because He forgot all those who had natural claims and ties upon Him. Because in the service of God, in the glorying of His father and in the doing of His will, and in the redemption of the world, He tarried not nor turned not to the right nor to the left until all might be accomplished, they said, "He is beside Himself." I wonder if anybody in the world ever got the impression that you were insane; you had got so much God, so much religion, so much of the Spirit of Jesus; you were so unselfish, so Christ-like, so Calvary-possessed that they said you were insane? The fact is, we are all too sane.

They said, "These men are drunk with new wine." "No," said Peter, for it is astonishing how 'cute at hearing Holy Ghost-filled people are—"no," he said, "we are not drunk. You are wrong. We are not drunk, as ye suppose. We are more sober than you think. But listen: this that you see, this that you hear, this mighty movement that you are feeling, this lightning flash, this illumination, this arrest of the attention, this evicting of sin, this crying for God, it

is not wine. This is a fulfillment of the promise, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.'"

Now, listen: if that first little picture of the early Church that you have in this chapter, or the preceding chapter, on the day of Pentecost, if that was God's ideal church, will you paint that picture as it was, and as it ought to be, and will you paint the picture of the Church of God, so called, to-day, and will you put the two side by side, and dare any man in his sane mind and in his sane moments say this is as that? Dare any man say that the Church to-day—and when I speak of the Church I use the word in the sense that the Bible uses it—dare any man say the Church to-day is that? I think if we are honest we shall say that we have fallen from grace. May God help us to get back again! You cannot read your Bible, you cannot read these Acts of the Spirit through the Apostles, you cannot read of these wonderful days of the first Church without feeling, "If that is God's ideal, where are we?" And do not blame anybody, because we are part of the society. The Church of God is made up of units, and you and I are units of that great Church, and we are responsible in our degree and in our capacity and

according to our light, we are responsible for the general condition of things. The Lord open our eyes that we may see as these men saw.

When a mighty Spirit came and took possession of them, and Peter had spoken a little bit, three thousand people fell and cried for mercy. That was a wonderful day's work, was it not? Three thousand conversions in a day! And then they say sometimes, "You must not count converts." Well, they counted them this time, and Jesus says there is joy in heaven over one; if He counts one He counts three thousand. And on the heels of that wonderful ingathering of souls, three thousand of them, they had a big collection. So you see the collection is as religious as getting people converted. Don't ever turn blue when the collection is made or announced, because the collection is as religious as Calvary, and until you know how to give you do not know what Calvary means. The collection is scriptural, and when a man puts his check-book on God's altar and says, "Here, Lord, here is my name; fill in that check just as you like; you know how much I can afford and you know how much I can give; fill it in for what you like," you may know he is not far from

the kingdom. Giving means grace, and when a man gets from God he must give to God.

Now, if Peter and John had come together and said, "Look here, brethren, we have had all these wonderful experiences and we have seen three thousand people converted, and we have so many converts to look after and to form into a Church ——" I can believe that this was not neglected by Peter and John, because as a rule the Lord knows the people with whom He can trust three thousand converts; the Lord knows the Church nowadays where He can trust new-born babes. If the Lord gave some Churches that I could name new-born babes they would have to put out their nursing, for they have neither food nor clothes for them, and no atmosphere that they could breathe. The Lord knows the people He can trust with converts. I can believe Peter and John did just exactly what I am saying they did—all that men could do to conserve what they had captured. If Peter and John had got together and said, "Now, look here, there is all this collection to be invested and stored, and taken great care of; all our Church coffers are full, we must have committees and trustees and all the rest of it," that would not be

neglected either, we know. I am sure Peter and John did not handle it, because a little later they had none. Now, fancy Peter and John, with the cross in their view, with the resurrection shining like a star in their sky, with the ascension fresh in their memory, with this mighty power of the Holy Spirit upon their lives, and the cry of three thousand souls in their ears. And yet Peter and John, who saw all that in the morning, could not stay away from the week-night prayer-meeting, and therein lies the power of their victory. You let me see the week-night prayer-meeting of any Church in your neighbourhood, and I will gauge its spiritual life. The week-night prayer-meeting is the spiritual thermometer of any Church, and if you will tell me how often you go to a week-night prayer-meeting I will tell you where you are, and if you will let me hear you pray in public, and give me a chance to put my finger on your spiritual pulse, I will diagnose your spiritual life. There never was a day in the history of the world when the Church was so rich in many ways as she is to-day. We never had such magnificent preaching as we have to-day. We never had such a multitude of splendid preachers as we have to-day. There have been times when

we have had fewer great preachers, and they stood out like mountain-tops, but the average man to-day is preaching the Gospel of the Son of God full and free. There never was a day when we had such magnificent church buildings as we have to-day. There never was a time when men were putting their hands deeper in their pockets to give their gold to the cause of God as they are doing to-day. There never was a day when you had such magnificent singing, Church singing—and do not think I am down on music, because I learned my music from God's choirs in feathers: the thrush, the nightingale, the skylark, the linnet. When God's choirs begin to sing everybody else must be silent. I do not mean vocal gymnastics, either, I mean singing—singing. There never was a day when the Church had such magnificent singing as she has to-day. There never was a day when the Church of God was giving so much to save the masses as she is doing to-day. Why, you remember, and so do I, ten or twelve or twenty years ago the mission-room was in a back street, a little low-ceilinged place, if it was not down in a cellar, with the windows broken, and the forms all crazy and wanted mending, an old asthmatical cabinet

organ in a corner with one pedal gone, and twenty or thirty young ragged urchins running about, and two or three young ladies to keep them quiet. And if you had anybody whom you had to let preach somewhere, and you did not want him in the Churches, somebody like Gipsy Smith, you sent him to the mission-room. And in the school of the big church, if you had a set of old hymn-books or Bibles that you could no longer go on with—books with half the pages missing—and an old instrument that you could manage with no longer, somebody got up and asked, "What shall we do with the old one?" And some economic brother said, "Oh, send it to the mission-room," and you expected to convert the slums by that cheap method. You have changed all that, thank God. You are spending thousands upon thousands on mission-halls, and you are giving your grandest instruments, your best singers, and your mightiest preachers to reaching the masses. All that is changed, and some of us have seen it changed. I wish we could change our prayer-meetings too. The weak spot in the Church of God is its prayer-meetings. You can crowd your school-rooms with entertainments, you can crowd them

with dramatic performances—and some of our Churches have them. I wish I could have my way with such churches. I would either convert the folk in them or I would set fire to the buildings. I would not allow God's house to be desecrated by worldly methods. You cannot save humanity with the devil's tools. You can crowd your churches with worldly things, but try to get the people to a prayer-meeting, they have got asthma, they have got a cold, they cannot come out at night. Some society leader invites them to dinner, and you hear nothing about the cold or the asthma, and they can go out in a dress too short at the top and too long at the bottom. Is it true? Is that a fancy picture? Listen—we are playing at religion. We are playing at it, the Lord help us to love it.

These men went to the prayer-meeting, and I want you to see that if the Church is to do anything in any neighbourhood for Jesus Christ she must put her prayer-life right. There is no substitute for prayer. Get all the learning, get all the culture, get all the gifts and all the grace, all the harmony and all the poetry, all the architecture and all the political and social influence, and grapple with it all and consecrate it

at the feet of Jesus, but remember there is no substitute for prayer. Peter and John went up to the house of prayer at the time appointed. Do you go to the prayer-meeting? It is a poor Church that does not know how to pray. Where are our heads of families on prayer-meeting night, where are our business men on prayer-meeting night, where are our Sunday-school teachers and superintendents, our choir leaders, on prayer-meeting nights? Listen, men and women; all the rest will not count for a row of pins, not so much, for there is not as much point about what you do. It will amount to nothing if you do not pray. You may preach till doomsday to your children, and your servants, and to the people you have influence over about going to church; when it is prayer-meeting night, and they know you could go and you do not go, and that you have no desire to go, all your preaching is of no use. It is the practicing that tells.

These men went to a prayer-meeting. And please remember it was Peter and John who were going together. Peter was not John, and John was not Peter. They were two opposites. They were as wide apart as men could be by disposition and in thought, but they went to-

gether. And it is getting Peter and John together at the prayer-meeting that brings victory. It may be that there are two men in your Church, if you could only get them on their knees at the prayer-meeting you will have a revival. It may be two women. I mean those people who have not spoken to each other lately. They are the two I mean. If you could only get them together at the prayer-meeting what a glad day it would be for the minister and for the congregation! If you could only get these people together! Well, you say, they do come occasionally. Yes, I know, one in this corner and one in that corner. Both will pray, and they will pray at one another. Have you ever heard it? Have you ever noticed five or six people in a prayer-meeting in a room? They are as far apart as the walls will let them get, and they are all saying, "Where two or three are met together," and if the walls were another mile apart they would be off. I do not know whether you see these things. They make me feel—well, I cannot help seeing them, these two men. Brother, find your Peter, will you? That would be a revival. Find your John, that would be a revival. Go and shake hands with

the man you have not spoken to lately, shake hands with the woman you have not been on friendly terms with. That is what I mean by getting together.

In a large Church I made that statement not long ago. At the close I wanted to speak to one of the officials when he came into the vestry for his hat, and I said, "Will you wait a minute, I want to speak to you?" He said, "Don't stop me now, I am in a hurry." I said, "What is the matter?" "Well," he said, "I am going to do just what you have told me." I said, "What is that?" He said, "I am going to speak to a brother office-bearer that I have not spoken to for five years, and it is all my fault, and while this Divine impulse is upon me I will do it before I get from it. I am going to find my Peter." And he had got him in a front pew at night where everybody in that crowded church could see him, and he wanted to rise and sing, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." The spirit of strife between those two men had torn the Church to shreds. You find your Peter, find your John. Peter and John went together. It is a good thing for you Christians of all denominations to mix up a little. You have been

living too far apart; and the nearer we get to Christ, the closer we shall get to each other. We have to live together when we get to heaven. Some of us had better learn how down here. All that is beautiful is together. Do not forget it. They went together at the hour of prayer.

Now, I want you to notice this, that Peter and John could be heard. I know they would when they said their prayers on their knees. They would be heard; I will tell you why. They lived their prayer. If you want the Lord to hear you say "Our Father" on your knees you live our Father on your feet. If you want the Lord to hear you when you get into the temple, you hear somebody else's prayer before you get into the temple. If you want the Lord to see you in the temple, see somebody who needs you before you get to the temple. If you want the Lord to put His hand on you in the temple, put your hand on some one before you reach the temple. These men started a little bit earlier, and gained a little bit of extra time on the way, to look out for some one they could find to take with them into their pew. I wonder how many of us do that? I wonder if any of you ever start ten minutes earlier on Sunday morning. I wonder if

you do ever see a poor cripple outside, paralyzed, crippled, handicapped, demoralized, degraded, cursed by sin; I wonder if you ever take time to speak to that person and say, "Look here, I have a book and I have a seat, and you come and sit with me; come along." For there are lots of people who will never come to church till they are carried. Do not forget that. This man would not have been at the door if he had not been carried there. Somebody loved him, somebody cared for him; he was lifted to that spot, and when Peter and John came along they saw him. Yes, listen: these are the men that God can trust with a bit of victory. They had eyes for three thousand, and they had eyes for a cripple. They had eyes for people who had houses and lands and money, and they had eyes and heart and hands for the poor fellow who wanted something. That is the man the Lord can trust. Have we eyes for the cripple, have we eyes for the harlot, have we eyes for the drunkard, have we eyes for the jail-bird, have we sympathy for the cursed? There are thousands outside our Churches and you have libelled them, miserably slandered them, hurled insult at them for their injury. Have you tried to save them? There

is in the worst in your city just as much as there was in you to which grace can appeal if you will only speak your gospel. God help you to act! There they are. How many of us try to save and rescue the perishing? It is easy to sing in the cushioned pew, or in the drawing-room with crewel-work slippers on. That is not religion, that is sentiment, that is dreaming. If you want to save the perishing you must go and handle them. Who is willing to do it? We talk about the non-church-goers, what about the non-going Church? We slander people when we say they do not want the Church. It is nonsense, it is not true. I will not hear them libelled. They do want God, they do want the Bible, they are not hostile to Jesus Christ, but they do hate the poor caricature they see of Him in the lives of so many of us who profess to follow Him; they hate that, but they do not hate Jesus; they respond to Jesus, and they know Jesus when they see Him. And I have lived to learn that there are far more people who will come and sit in your pew if you ask them than you dream of.

I do not know what you do in your town when there is an election, but I know what they do where I live. It does not matter how far a man

lives from the polling-booth, the candidate goes and sees him, if he has a vote, if he is on the register. They go and knock at his door, and they do not open it till it is answered. They treat him with respect. He is a voter. If the wife comes to the door, they ask to see the husband, and then they are invited to sit down, and if there is a bird in the cage it is the finest bird that ever was; if there is a little flower in the pot —well, it is a beautiful flower, and if he has got some chickens they go and look at his chickens; and if there is a dog, they pat the dog; and if there is a baby, they don't forget to kiss the baby, though it is not over clean. They have their eyes on the vote, and if the man is not at home they go again and again and again till they are sure of him, or the other man is, and when the day of polling comes they are so anxious to get the man up to the scratch that they don't wait for him to walk, they send a carriage or a motor car. Is that true? How much do you do when you want him to come to Church? You never invite him, you never go and see him, you never tell him there is a service; the only thing you do is to pull a piece of rope, and tell him by that piece of brass or metal that there is a service

going on, and the fellow says that "when they wanted my vote they could come and see me, now they want me converted they don't know me." And the working man sees through the fraud, and it is time he did, and it is time you saw it. Listen: there are more cripples will respond to the touch of real sympathy than any of you dream of. You do not know what is in them; you have never dived, you have never dug, you have never searched. There are more than you think. A little while ago I stood in a wonderful mine in Kimberley—a diamond mine. I was taken down 2,520 feet, and they gave me a pick and I brought down some of that blue mould carrying the diamonds to my feet. Some of it crumbled, and I searched with the electric light, but I could see no diamond. Yet in that ground there are diamonds of countless value, and God put them there. Somebody was riding through your streets one day with Ruskin and said, "What disgusting stuff this London mud is!" Ruskin said, "In that mud there are the sand and soot and water and lime out of which God makes opals and sapphires and diamonds." And if God can make opals and sapphires and diamonds out of London mud, He can make something out of

the poor cripple that lives next door to you, if you will only help God to save him, and that is your business and mine now. Fasten your eyes on somebody. If they are crippled you know not what is there. Give it a chance. Smile on it, love it, help it; it will surprise you. There may be a lump of humanity, all dwarfed, twisted, crooked, never had a chance yet, remember; cursed in its birth, made drunk in its mother's milk, born with the blood of the harlot, the drunkard and the thief in its veins. In God's name have pity on such! Christ died for the worst. If you believe it, live as though you did, and help them back to God.

Peter and John fastened their eyes on this poor cripple, and that was the dawn of the eternal day for the poor fellow. They said, "Look on us," and he did, and he expected something immediately—and there are lots of folk who have looked at you and expected something. Have they been disappointed? "Look on us." And then Peter made a beautiful little speech, and preached a nice little sermon. He said, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up, and walk." Now, you and I might do that until further orders. But Peter did not stop there. Throwing back

the robe he bared his arm, and got near enough, and he picked him up by the right hand and lifted him up. I wonder what some of you would do with a poor cripple. You will have to stoop if you would lift. Good stoopers are needed in the Church. When I was a gipsy, I lived in my tent. I never slept in a house till I was seventeen. I was just a gipsy boy, and when I was travelling the counties of Cambridge and Essex and Suffolk and Norfolk, I used to see the farmers go into the fields with their wagons and carry the golden grain to the ricks, and when the stackyards were bursting with prosperity then the farmers would open the gates of the fields and let the parishioners go in, and do you know what they called it? Gleaning. I noticed, when I was only a boy, that good gleaners had to be good stoopers. And, brothers, if you go out into God's fields to glean cripples for Him, you must stoop. If you are going to help anybody you will have to stand a little higher than they are, or you won't lift them far. Make sure of your standing. Peter got hold of him by the right hand and lifted him up, and there are moments in a man's life when a lift of that sort will lift him not only for time, but for eternity. I

have got hold of men's hands in South Africa and looked them in the face, and they have never said one word, just gripped their hand, and it has been the touch of their mother's grief again, it has been the touch of their home, and I have seen big tears fall like bubbles on a mountain stream. I tell you there is something indescribable in the touch of a human hand. Take your glove off, handle these poor things for Christ's sake. It is all very well to say, "Oh, you believe in the Lord Jesus."

Listen: you have got good blood in your veins, you have got the moral momentum of a godly ancestry coursing through your veins, you were brought up in a Christian home, you have had the advantages of education, of Church life, ministers in charge of your Sunday-school, teachers to visit you, Christian parents to love you. You have everything in the world to help you to believe, yet there are moments when it takes all the time to get you to believe. Have pity on those who have not had your chance. It is all very well to say, "Believe, believe." You have got to become Jesus Christ in human form, and let them handle you, and believe in Him as He reveals Himself through you. God help us

to do it. The cripples will be saved when the Church handles them.

He went to church—of course he did. He was a cripple. And there are lots of people who will come into church leaping and dancing for joy when you go and handle them. That is the way in for them. That is the way in; the way into your pew is through your hand and through your heart, and through your eyes and through your legs and through your life. The way to God for some of these people is by you. They will come fast enough, only give them a chance, and make you feel you want them. They feel you want their votes. When they come to church they look at the pews and see the little notice boards, so to speak, with names on them, as much as to say, "Keep off the grass," and if twenty or thirty of them got to church before some of you were there and got into your pew from the slums before you reached it, some of you would turn up your nose and call the deacons or the office-bearers and say, "This is my pew." Then we talk about the non-church-goer. The Lord save us from cant and humbug. Don't you monopolize any little bit of God's heritage. It does not belong to you. It is His. His house is open for

the world. Give Him a chance in His own house, and give those a chance that need Him most.

Poor cripple, of course he got more than he asked for. He asked for alms, and the Lord gave him legs. It is always a surprise; Jesus always gives more than we ask, and you and I, who have tried to love Him for years, find every day a glad surprise. We thought we could not stand, but we walked. We thought we could not walk, but we ran. We thought we could not endure, but we are living. We thought we should never hold on, but here we are, blessed be God. Brother, live your gospel, and the cripples all around you will touch your hand, and through it they will catch the pulse of the love which went to the cross, which is strong enough to save the world. God help us to do so. Amen.

XI

HID WITH CHRIST

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."—*Col. 3: 1–11.*

XI

HID WITH CHRIST

A TALK WITH CHRISTIAN BEGINNERS

I WANT if I can to emphasize some very wholesome truths this morning, especially for the sake of those who have just set out to serve the Lord. I will take as the basis of my remarks Col. 3, verses 1 to 11.

Now look at the first verse—"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." As much as to say, "You have professed faith in Christ, you have taken your stand in the most public and solemn way possible, and declared yourselves to be on His side. You have taken upon yourselves the great name of Christian. Now," says the apostle, "if that is so, we shall expect to see it in your life." It is not enough to stand up, you must keep up. It is not enough to stand, you must walk. It is not enough to have a name, you must have a life. For if Christianity be anything, it is a progressive life. When once you have accepted Jesus Christ

as your Saviour from sin, when once you have made Him your Lord and your king, then you must, if you are to be loyal, true, honourable, then you must dedicate every moment of your life to His service. You must let it be seen everywhere that you are now not your own, but that you belong to Him, that the profession you made the other night or years ago when you said, "As for me and all I am concerned with and have any authority over, I will serve the Lord," that profession must be lived out. Every day and every hour of every day, not only in the Church but in the home, in the workshop, in the business, in the office, in the political arena, in public and in private, I am Christ's man, I am Christ's woman, and I must act, I must live, I must walk, I must so conduct myself, so transact my business, so think and so speak that the Divine stamp will be on me and will be felt and seen everywhere. I must live with this ever before me, "I am risen with Christ, and by my life, my neighbours, my friends, my servants, my master, my acquaintances and relatives must see that my heart is set on things above.

You say you have been in the inquiry-room, you had your name taken down as an inquirer,

you knelt and prayed with those who tried to help you, and you really did on your knees honestly and intelligently seek to give yourself to Jesus Christ. Did you think that the battle was over then? If you did you never made a greater blunder. It is only beginning. That was the initiative, that was the first step, that was the turning, that was the yielding, that was acknowledging the facts of the case. Now the fight will begin, and it will be a fight; it will be a conflict from here till the great white throne is in view. But remember, you are not alone. They that are for you are more than all that can be against you. You joined the Church a long time ago? You took communion, and you are perhaps an office-bearer, a deacon, a Sunday-school teacher, and go to church regularly? Is that all the evidence that you have of the new-born life? Have you nothing else to say for yourself but that you take communion and go to church twice on a Sunday, and you are a Sunday-school teacher and occasionally—for such miracles do sometimes happen—you go to the week-evening prayer-meeting? Is that all the evidence you have that you are a King's son? If ye then be risen with Christ let us see the resurrection life

or we won't believe your profession, and if I were your pastor I would not believe in your professed Christian life unless I knew by your beautiful walk that God had saved you from sin, and that you were seeking to walk as becometh the Gospel.

I wonder if your wife knows you have been in the inquiry-room—and she is a good judge. I wonder if your husband knows that you have been in the inquiry-room, my sister. He will know every time he comes home from work if you are a real Christian woman; he will come home a little faster than he used to to get a look at you. Just as sure as the sun rises and shines and kisses the earth into beauty, when God touches the human life He transforms it from sin to grace. I do not care how bad the man is that you live with, I do not care how bad the woman is that lives with you, or how bad the workmates are that you work with, deep down in their hearts they will admire the beautiful thing God makes. I wonder if your employer knows that you are born again, because he will if you are. The man who is really born again will watch his religion in the minutest details of his life. His religion will be seen in the little things. Everybody will know that you are born again

who knows you. You remember that wonderful instance in the life of the Son of God when that leper came to Him and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean," and Jesus said, "I will; be thou clean," and He touched him and his leprosy departed from him, and then Jesus said to the man, "Tell nobody; see that no man know it, but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses hath commanded for a testimony unto them." I think that man said, "Blessed Jesus, I shall tell the first man I meet." He could not help himself. A leper cleansed and nobody know it! It could not be. And if you are a new man in Christ Jesus, I tell you somebody is going to know it. And thank God for it.

"Seek those things that are above." Let your life be in harmony with your profession. That is what it means. It is not enough simply to have your name put down somewhere, to join a club, or an educational institution, or a social meeting-house. It means living a life that shall be in harmony with the law of God, that shall glorify God, that shall be God-honouring, that shall be a witness for His glory in the world in which you live, that shall be saying quietly

though you never say a word, "My life is what God has made it, and He can do the same for you," beautifully lived, beautifully clean, full of music, full of God, and that life will be a sermon unanswerable, and many a man will listen to a sermon like that who would never listen to one from the pulpit. They will see that sermon lived out when they will not read Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the Acts, and so forth. But though they will not look into these things, they will search your life, and they will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. And what the world wants more and more of to-day is the faithful sermon lived in workshop, market-place, warehouse, bank and shop and store and railway train and street car, the life which is Christlike. God means us to live, and I pray God that life may be seen in you and seen in me more and more.

And the apostle goes on, You have to live this life for this reason—for your life, the old life, the selfish, sinful life, the old life of unbelief and sin, the old life of world and flesh and devil, and seeking your own, the old life is dead. The Lord help you to bury it. Some of you stick to the corpse and drag it about with you. You are like

Lazarus—you are out of the grave, but you want the grave-clothes off. If you are risen with Christ, the old life is dead. You know the apostle said on one occasion, "Christ died for me." Then he said again, "I am crucified with Christ." So Paul was only preaching what he realized, what he experienced. Christ took my place, Christ hung on the cross for me, and bore the shame and the curse for me, He paid the debt for me. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Oh, the mystery of it! oh, the length and breadth and depth and height of it!—*He died for me.* And oh, the next step is still more wonderful. "I am crucified with Christ." The old man dead with Christ. And then he goes on to say in another place, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And then he says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." So that He not only pays my old debts off, but He puts me in the position that I need never get into debt any more. He gives me a life which shall enable me to do these things, to walk before Him, and to please Him, and I have the testimony that my life is accepted in Christ Jesus. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," hidden away in the heart of God. I

shall never forget when as a young disciple I grasped that thought for the first time. I cannot tell you the comfort it was to me. I cannot tell you the strength it brought me. I cannot tell you the courage it gave me when I realized that my salvation did not depend on my feelings or my thoughts or my frames or my surroundings, my success or my failures, but my salvation depended on my living faith and my honest obedience in a living Christ. Will you grip that, you who have just trusted Jesus as your Saviour? The mission is soon over, the missioner soon gone, and the dark days come—the days of fighting, the days of conflict, the days when you stand alone, the days in which there is no light. The day will come in which you have to stand alone to face the foe single-handed, and have to fight hard if you mean to win, without a scrap of feeling, without any sensation of joy or peace, when you have to go at it with the facts before you, with God's unalterable word staring you in the face, and to stand by it in spite of suffering. And I tell you it will be a source of strength to you in that moment if you can close your eyes and say to the devil and the world and the flesh and everything that seems to

be against you, "Look here, my life is hid with Christ in God, and it does not matter how I feel or what I am, it all depends on what He is." God help you to believe that. Mind you, I am supposing that you will honestly seek to do right, and I am supposing that you will honestly keep your faith settled, grounded in God; I am honestly supposing that you will neither turn to the right nor to the left nor listen to the voice of the tempter. But I am now speaking of the days that will come; for they come to us all, and they come to me—days when I have not much feeling, days when I am weary and tired, days when I am alone and have to fight the devil alone. Ah, there are times when I am too tired to pray, when if my salvation depended on my getting on my knees and praying for an hour I could not do it, and the Lord knows I could not do it. I never passed through such physical, mental, or nervous strain in my life as during my recent mission in South Africa, and there were many nights when I got home from my work too tired to kneel down and pray—nights when I could not sleep. And you know the devil generally comes when a man is down, and the devil says to him, "Where is your feeling now, where is your happiness now

where is your joy now, where is your shouting feeling now?" And do you know what I do on these occasions when I am too tired to pray? I just throw myself on the bed and say, "Blessed Jesus, we are on the same old terms; it is all right, my life is hid with Christ in God." Don't be afraid. Jesus says, "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and no man shall be able to pluck them out of My Father's hands." No man shall pluck them out. Don't walk out. Have sense to stay in the safe place, the sure place; stay there. The devil may tempt, but you know you need not yield; you can resist him. Jesus does not undertake to save you from temptation, but He undertakes to save you in it, to keep you from yielding. Do not think you have more temptation than you can stand? With every temptation that comes God comes, for He says, "Ye shall not be tempted above that ye are able to bear, and with the temptation I will make a way of escape." God comes as soon as the devil. Don't you think that the devil can run faster than God? God is ahead of him all the time, and if you will believe it, He will hold you and He will keep you.

And nobody can rob you of this assurance if

you will make up your mind to hold it with a steady faith, with an obedient faith. I shall never forget a little bit of my own experience soon after my father's conversion. He and his two brothers—the three gipsy men—were all converted in one week, and it was a rare thing to see three gipsy men—my father was the least of the three, and he stood six feet—it was a rare thing to see those big fellows transformed by the grace of God, and wherever they were seen people wanted to see them again and listen to their beautiful testimony, for it was a wonderful work of grace that was done in and for those three men. In 1874 they were invited down to Portsmouth for a week's mission, and between Portsmouth and Southampton they liked them so well that the week became three, four, five, and it was six weeks before they came home, and you know when father was away from our tent mother was away too, for he was both to us. Mother was gone. The other tents had their mothers, we had not, and oh, those six weeks did seem a long time to us who were motherless. And one morning a letter came to say they would be home to-morrow, and we were ready for them at six o'clock in the morning. We

did not know anything of trains, and it was night ere they came. And when father came into the old tent we all made way for the baby girl to go to him first, as was our custom, and he sat down and put his arms round her and kissed her and fondled her. She was the baby, and he had not seen her for six weeks. The others of us were waiting our turn, but she had father too long for some of us. It was my turn next, and I think I felt it more than the rest; my boyish heart longed for love and sympathy, for I never got over my mother's death. I longed for the touch of my father's hand and heart, and she did not come out, and I said at last, for I could stand it no longer, "Come out, come out, it is my turn!" She rolled her black eyes at me, and said, "You get me out of my father's arms if you can." "Well," I said, "I cannot do that, but there is room for me, and I am coming in," and I crept in, and oh, the joy that seemed to steal into my boyish heart as I felt those dear arms about me! My brother, my sister, God's arms, your Father's arms are about you if you will but believe it. Your life is hid with Christ in God.

Seeing this is so, I want you to notice this especially—there is some very straight talking here,

no trimming about Paul, no attempt at saving people's feelings or preconceived notions. He puts in the knife with no asking if he may. Paul is a wonderful spiritual surgeon, and he begins the operation without any questioning. He says, "Mortify"—make dead—"your members which are upon earth." As the Spirit reveals to you more and more the life of Jesus, and as you become acquainted with His Word, when you take the next step and walk humbly with your God, and you detect in your heart and life elements of the world, the remnants of evil, any roots of bitterness, as you detect unruly members, evil members in your life, says the Holy Ghost through this wonderful apostle, "Make them dead," kill them, put the knife in, slay utterly; mortify, self-suicide, that is what it means. Kill self, kill the world, kill the flesh, kill the devil, mortify, "make dead your members which are upon the earth." Then he names the black list: fornication—and he is talking to the children of God—fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, the evil look, the evil spring, the passion within, the impure thought, the suggested thing that is wrong; though it may seem beautiful—slay it, kill it. Your life within is to be a

slaughter-house for all that God hates. "For which things' sake," he says, "the wrath of God cometh upon the sinner and the disobedient." And if a man will allow any of these things to live in his life, any Amalekite is allowed to lift his doomed head in your life, remember the sheep will bleat and the oxen will low, and there will be death to somebody. You and I have to die *to* sin or to die *with* sin. Sin must die or I must. The Holy Ghost and the sin of the past cannot live in the same heart. One will go out. Therefore he says, "Make dead."

> "Buried with Christ and raised with Him too,
> What is there left for me to do?
> Simply to cease from struggling and strife,
> Simply to walk in newness of life."

That is our business. We are to turn from the things we used to love, and of which we are ashamed to-day to think of. We are to turn from them in loathing and disgust and walk the straight life with the Son of God.

Then in the eighth verse he makes this statement—"Put off all these." How thorough Paul is! He seems to leave nothing. He enters into every detail. "Put off these things—anger, you must not be angry, you should be sweet and

beautiful, full of smiles, full of sunshine; you must not frown or feel like it, you must not get angry, you must not slam doors and knock things over and stamp about the house as though you would shake creation, because that is not like Jesus. You have to be like Him. Put off anger. And if grace cannot sweeten your temper it cannot do much. Mind your temper. Keep a bit in its mouth and a kicking-strap on too. The Psalmist says in one place, "Be not as the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." And there are some people who need a kicking-strap as well as a bridle and they are called Christians. "Put off anger." I have seen people turn red in the face and swell at the neck and bite their lips—what a storm was raging!—and they managed to keep it in—that is, it was silent—and when it was over they said, "I didn't say anything, did I?" No, but you looked daggers, and you did more harm with that five minutes' explosion than you did good in a year of your Christian life. That is the thing that makes it difficult for the person who lives with you to be a Christian, that is the thing that hinders you winning for Christ, and

you would win them if you were even and if grace had had its perfect work within you. If God has saved you from big sins He can save you from your temper. I know He can. Trust Him even for that. Put off anger, wrath. What is the difference between wrath and anger? There is a difference, a very big difference. Wrath is anger with the lid off, and then you say things, you splutter, then you are not responsible for what you do say, and you would give your right arm to unsay some things. Years ago you made a wound that has never been healed, you made a breach that has never been bridged, and those hot, cutting, wrathful words did what will never be undone this side of the gates of pearl. They may be forgiven but undone never. Somebody has said that—

> "Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds,
> But you cannot do that when you are flying words.
> Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes seem as dead,
> But God cannot kill them when once they are said."

Put off wrath. There are members of Churches who have lost friends—dear friends. You would have rather lost your right hand than lose them and you lost them through the cutting word that you have never been prepared to take

back. They flew high, they flew straight, they went into the very soul of your friend, they were cut to the quick. It was your withering word that did the mischief. Put off wrath.

Something else—what is it? Malice. "Put off malice." Is there any difference between wrath and malice? Yes, malice is wrath cooled down, settled into what? Hatred, murder—and nobody can be a child of God with murder in the soul; the Book says if I hate my brother I am a murderer. You have done the deed inside if you hate anybody: you are a murderer. Put off anger, put off wrath, put off malice, and be attractive, lovable, full of the spirit of Jesus: "there was no guile found in His mouth," and you are to be like Him.

Then He makes another statement. He says, "Lie not one to another"—lie, not, and He is talking to believers. Be truthful, do not tell any lie, any business lie, any society lie, or any other kind of lie, white lie or black lie—and the whitest lie I ever knew was as black as the devil. Lie not. Don't put in your window, "Selling off at a great sacrifice" if it is not so. It may be a sacrifice to the other fellow, not to you. You do not exist for philanthropic purposes. Tell the

truth. Don't tell people you are glad to see them when you are not. Don't ask people to stay for tea when you do not want them, and don't ask people to call and see you just because it looks the proper thing to do, if in your heart you do not mean it. Lie not. Lots of people in the Church of God cannot get on in their spiritual life because of the spirit of lying. Don't tell the preacher you enjoyed his sermon when you did not. If you do enjoy the sermon tell him so once in a way, it will help him to preach better next time. But lie not. Be truthful. Say nothing rather than equivocate or talk double. And it means be honest, too. This "lie not" means honesty in life and character as well as in words. It means paying your debts. It means making restitution. On the Monday morning after the first Sunday I preached in Johannesburg a gentleman walked into the house of a leading Dutchman, took out of his pocket a gold watch and said, "The watch is yours. I stole it from you eight years ago. I heard Gipsy Smith yesterday and I got converted, and now I must give back this watch. It does not belong to me." That is religion.

Some years ago in one of my missions in a vil-

lage a Yorkshireman professed conversion, a rough man, a drunkard, a swearer, a gambler, and he joined the Methodist Church. One of his pals of years ago called on him and said —

"Jack, I hear thou's gotten converted."

"Yes," said he, "I have."

"And joined t' Church?"

"Yes, and joined t' Church."

"Well, Jack," he said, "you remember so many years ago you borrowed a sovereign off me?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack, "I remember very well."

"Well," he said, "now you are a Christian I shall expect that sovereign back."

"Oh," said Jack, "the Lord has pardoned my sins, and that is one of them."

I was not long in finding out Jack and I said, "Jack, that may be a very convenient sort of Gospel, but if you are a Christian you will pay that man his sovereign if you sacrifice a coat to do it."

Then the apostle said something else. "Put away filthy communications"—blasphemy, filthy talking. Listen again: if you are a Christian you will *never tell another filthy tale.* If you are a Christian you will *never listen to another filthy tale.* If you are a Christian, young man, young

woman, you will never listen to another smutty joke. There are scores, hundreds of young people who have lost their hold on God and become backsliders, and old people too, because they indulged in smut. Put filthy communications out of your mouth. Say nothing that needs to be whispered. Listen to nothing that you would not like your mother to hear. Tell nothing you would not like Jesus to listen to. Do not say anything about your neighbour that you would not like to say face to face. Keep your tongue, keep your speech, keep your mouth, keep your heart, keep your body, keep your life for Jesus' sake.

And He who calls you to this beautiful life will put His wing around you if you will but trust Him and obey Him. And all the strength, and all power, and all the wisdom, and all the Christlikeness He will breathe into you, and you will become for Christ a great power for good and for all blessing to all about you. Amen.

XII

THE NEW LIFE

A MESSAGE TO NEW CONVERTS

I WANT to have a talk with you about the new life and the way you are to live it. Do not think your decision for Christ means the fight is all over; it is only beginning. But remember all about you are forces Divine; you will no longer walk or battle alone—God, the Almighty God, is for you, and just as sure as He sits on the throne, you will overcome all opposing forces if you will trust and obey. Do not be afraid to believe this. Tell yourself this is true. Go over your surrender to God very often.

> "Sing it aloud when you wake in the morning,
> Meet the new day with its jubilant strain,
> No condemnation, for Jesus hath found you."

Saved you—you are His. "By grace have ye been saved" (Eph. 2:5). Let there be no doubt about this; be sure this is so at the beginning. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting

life" (John 3:36). Press hard on the word *hath*; claim the assurance now; let the certainty of these words be your hope, your joy, and strength. God says it, and it must be so, and no power on earth can gainsay it or overthrow it for a moment.

You have yielded yourself to Jesus, you are born again, you have accepted Him as your Saviour for time and eternity. He who bore your sins on Calvary has now broken their power and saves you from the guilt and power of sin. You are accepted in the beloved; you are no longer an alien or afar off, you have been brought nigh by the blood of His Cross. You are now the child of God. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving (Col. 2:6, 7). You are now *in Him*, as the branch is in the vine, part of Him. Keep every channel of your being open, and in sympathy with your root and head, that every part of you may be filled with the life Divine. Never let the vine be ashamed of the branch, or even feel it to be a dead weight; be filled with life and health and there will be beauty and fruit.

Abide in Him, keep your roots in Him, and you may grow. Abiding means fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Allow nothing to break this communion or intrude for a moment between you and your beloved. Hold a constant witness to the cleansing power of the precious blood; live at the foot of the cross. Keep heart and mind fixed upon Him by an habitual obedience. The need for this is made very clear in the Master's words, "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10). Obedience is abiding. Love must obey, because it rests in the eternal love. Oh! the blessedness which can and does say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to *keep* (or *guard*) that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). Surely this must prompt fruitfulness and every good work (John 15:8; 1 John 2:36).

Cultivate moral backbone. Be able to stand for Christ. Let there be constancy in your character, firmness of mind. Fix your whole being upon God to know and understand Him. Daniel was greatly beloved because he set his

mind and heart upon God. The Divine heart felt it could depend upon Daniel, and knew he would be true and loyal, and anywhere and all the time. The heart of God longs for those in whom He can delight (Matt. 3 : 17), and upon whom He can depend. He desires all who love Him to be strong, pure, and holy in heart and life; nothing else will or can bring Him glory and give Him joy. These are some of the unchanging facts of God's Word. Those who understand, believe, and obey these things will be calm, strong, holy and peaceful, fully assured of God's pardon and cleansing, and will be humble, grateful, bold to speak, and ready to do any and every service for the glory of God and the good of humanity.

"Let your light shine before men." Never fail to witness for Christ, in your home, *first* of all, not only in word but in deed; in the Church amongst fellow Christians, and in the world, never be ashamed of Jesus. You are to be a witness for Him—this is His desire for you. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1 : 8). "They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12 : 11). There are

thousands of professing Christians who have no joy, because they bear no witness for Christ. Oh! for the boldness of Peter when he said, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4 : 20). *As far as you can, undo the past.* If there is anything wrong in the past of your life, and you can put it right, do so without delay. If you have taken anything from any man, restore fully, or go as far as you can in that direction; this is right. Not only *forsake* sin, but *confess* it, for that will put you right with the man you have wronged, as well as bring you into close relationship with God. For God requireth that which is past" (Eccles. 3 : 15). The jailer at Philippi took Paul and Silas "*the same hour of his conversion and washed their stripes.*" He could not wait till morning; when morning came he was rejoicing in God. Joy always follows stripe-washing. Let all those who know you see your religion means doing right all along the line. This may mean time and trouble, and even suffering, but the soul made right with God must get right with man. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12 : 18). "The wicked borroweth and payeth not again, but the

righteous showeth mercy and forgiveth" (Psa. 37 : 21). "Render therefore to all their dues" (Rom. 13 : 7). "Owe to no man anything but to love one another" (Rom. 13 : 8). Let your conscience be clear on this matter. Have nothing hidden away in your life which will not bear the light. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14 : 17). *Righteousness first:* the rest will follow.

Bible-reading must be done. If you are to grow, you will need "the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2 : 2). One of the great needs of to-day is more real knowledge of the Word of God. "Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3 : 16). Rise in time in the morning to read your portion; the day will be all the brighter because you have looked into the living Word. Seek some truth by which to fight the battles of the day. Hide it in your heart, delight in the law of the Lord, then when Satan assaileth or difficulties arise you will have your sword with which to fight the enemy, for the power of the Word will be within you. By taking heed to His Word you will be able to live clean and pure, noble and strong (Psa. 119 : 9).

Cultivate the habit of prayer. The abiding in Him means a life of prayer. Get into the habit of talking to God as you would your dearest and closest earthly friend; speak to Him—only "speak and He will hear," for He is so near to the heart that has fully surrendered and is fully trusting Him. You need not go through a great many high-sounding sentences in order to pray—indeed, sometimes there is far more in silence than in words, when one bows in heart and in spirit before the Lord. And, mind you, you can talk with God all the time—in the private place, in market, mart and office, schoolroom, bank and drawing-room, kitchen and factory, God is there, near, always—blessed be God!—to those who hang upon Him. Do not be discouraged because you cannot make long prayers; the most effectual prayers I ever heard were short. All the prayers recorded in the Bible were brief; but they kept on praying, praying always; live in the spirit of prayer, that is the ideal life. You cannot be always on your knees. I cannot; and God does not want us to, either. *There are duties which, when done faithfully, are prayers.* When the heart and eye are single, every act may be a prayer. All work well done, and done unto the

Lord, may be obedience to the words, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5 : 17).

Don't lose heart because you are tempted. You will be more conscious of temptation now you have given yourself to God and are trying to do right. The devil is now your bitter enemy; he will seek to trip you at every step. He would delight to overthrow you; your fall would be a great victory for him. But, remember, you are not alone. Jesus is not only for you, He is within you, and all about you, as a wall of fire; you have nothing to fear; the Mighty One lives to bring you through the temptation *more than conqueror.* You do not fight alone, or you would fail. The Lamb slain before the throne is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He lives to give victory again and again. Be not afraid! But you say, "Suppose I am overtaken and fall into sin, what am I to do then?" Go back to God instantly for pardon and cleansing. The command is "Sin not"; "but if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2). If a little child should go out, just after being washed and dressed and made beautifully clean, and fall down into the mud, and spoil the clean clothes and cut his hands and face, you know

what that child would do, do you not? He would get up crying, all dirty and bleeding, and would run back to mother—his best friend—and tell her all about the fall, the cut hands and face, and she, like the mother she is, would wash and cleanse, heal and kiss him; the mother heart could do no less. God is better than a mother. Try Him. Do not lie there; get up and go to Him for pardon and healing, and He will say to thee, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee" (Isa. 56: 13).

Be glad in the Lord. Have some sunshine in your voice, some song in your soul. When there is a song in your soul, it will be heard in your voice; your religion should never make children and dogs run away from you. Do be attractive. Let the morning shine in your face, and the song the angels sing in your voice. Do not live in the shade. "Forget not all His benefits" (Psa. 103: 2). Count your blessings, think of all God has done *for you*, and you will have joy—the cream—and good milk always gives cream.

Be out and out for Christ; do not sit on the fence. If you are at once altogether decided to follow Jesus anywhere and everywhere, it will

make it much easier for you and everybody else. Take stand against everything doubtful. Do nothing and go nowhere where Jesus cannot go with you or smile upon you. Let your life be the Christ life. Do as He wills; in all things seek His glory, not the wishes of those around you, but God first in all things. You will not please all the people, I know, if you are to be what He wills; but this is in the business (1 John 3 : 1). As the world knew Him not, so it will not know you, if you are like Him. Hot saints are sure to make lukewarm folk mad.

Remember you are saved to serve. Christ Himself came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for the world. You, too, must be of service to some one if you would enter into the joy of the Lord. Try to register some bit of honest work for Christ and man, every day you live. There may be tears and heartache in the work, but remember Christ's life was service for you. If you are His, you must serve. All He did was done because He loved. "I *must* work," said Jesus. If you have His Spirit, can you be selfish and idle? "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8 : 14). You may be

saying, "What can I do?" *Do the little things.* Begin in the home, speak lovingly, act gently. Serve those who are near you—father, mother, sister, brother, wife, husband, child. Sink your own will and rights for their good, do not seek all the good for yourself. Always be willing for those about you to share with you, and ever be willing to deny yourself. A heart filled with the love which "never faileth" will in the end win great victories. We possess most truly when we give most away; we save ourselves only when we lose ourselves for Christ's dear sake. Let this mind be in you.

I have one other word to say to you; it is this: *Connect yourself at once with the people of God;* join a Christian Church, where you can take root and grow. You will need all the help you can get from Christian fellowship, and you *ought* to be *imparting help* and *hope* to *others.* Be an active Church member, keep awake, and wide awake. Help to bear your share of all the burden of the Church life. Attend its ordinances, be regular at the services, and, above all, do attend the week-night prayer-meeting. Take part in all its services and life. Do not be silent when you should be heard. Be a shining, bright beam

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¶ "Here is one of the real miracles. People balk at the ordinary miracle—a cripple cured or an ax floating—and see nothing marvelous in such a life as that of Gipsy Smith. ¶ A poor gipsy lad is touched by the divine healer of souls; his spirit awakes, he begins to testify of God's work in him; first his neighbors listen, then multitudes, finally nations. ¶ His life is one long, splendid miracle of grace, attested by thousands of witnesses."

—*The Church Economist.*

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